Encyclopedia of Children, Adolescents, and the Media

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Edited by

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

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Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts

A SAGE Reference Publication

SAGE Publications
Thousand Oaks ■ London ■ New Delhi

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For information:

SAGE Publications, Inc.
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: order@sagepub.com

SAGE Publications Ltd.
1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
B-42, Panchsheel Enclave
Post Box 4109
New Delhi 110 017 India

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Encyclopedia of children, adolescents, and the media/[edited by] Jeffrey Jensen Arnett.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1–4129–0530–3 or 978-1-4129-0530-5 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. Mass media and children—Encyclopedias. 2. Mass media and teenagers—Encyclopedias. 3. Internet and children—Encyclopedias. 4. Internet and teenagers—Encyclopedias. 5. Video games and children—Encyclopedias. 6. Video games and teenagers—Encyclopedias. I. Arnett, Jeffrey Jensen. II. Title.
HQ784.M3E53 2007
302.23083—dc22 2006016723

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

06 07 08 09 10 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher: Rolf Jenke
Acquiring Editor: Jim Brace-Thompson
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Copy Editors: April Wells-Hayes
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Typesetter: C&M Digitals (P) Ltd.
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The Reader's Guide is provided to assist readers in locating articles on related topics. It classifies articles into 17 general topical categories: Advertising; Advocacy Groups; Books and Print Media; Computers and Electronic Media; Cross-Cultural Perspectives; Developmental Stages; Gender and Sexuality; Media Education; Media Effects; Media Use; Movies; Music; Public Policy; Research Methods; Television; Theories; and Violence and Aggression. Entries may be listed under more than one topic.

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About the Editor

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett is a research professor at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. During fall 2005, he was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Copenhagen. He has taught at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, the University of Missouri, and the University of Maryland. He received his Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Virginia and was a postdoctoral fellow for 3 years at the University of Chicago.

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Brown is the coeditor and coauthor of four books, including *Sexual Teens, Sexual Media* (2002). Her research has been published in adolescent as well as media/communication journals, including the *Journal of Adolescent Health, Pediatrics, Journal of Communication,* and *Mass Communication and Society*.

She has served on the CHHD-W Population Sciences Committee (PSC) study section and the national boards of Advocates for Youth, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and the Trojan Sexual Health Advisory Council, and the selection committee for the William T. Grant Foundation's Young Scholars Program. She received a PhD from the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Keith Roe is Director of the PhD School of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. In 1991, he was appointed Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication at the university, and he served as chair of the department from 1996 to 2000. In 2000, he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, a position he held until 2003. He previously served as a Visiting Professor at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill and the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. From 1985 to 1990, he was Research Fellow at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden), including periods as a Visiting Scholar in Budapest and Humboldt University (Berlin).

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Introduction

It was 1904, and G. Stanley Hall, writing his magnum opus on adolescent development, was concerned about rising crime rates among American youth. He discerned a variety of causes, but one key source of the problem was the media. As Hall saw it, a young man may be induced to commit crimes in part because "his mind becomes inflamed with flash literature and 'penny dreadfuls'" that portray crime as glamorous and heroic (p. 361). This was not the only problem of youth that Hall attributed to media influences. Johann von Goethe's 1774 novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* remained popular in Hall's time—with pernicious effects, according to Hall. "The reading of romance has great influence on the development of youthful passion. Werther has created a distinct psychosis known as Wertherism" (p. 387).

Hall and his contemporaries could hardly have imagined the media environment that today's children and adolescents experience. The "literature" Hall worried about is still there, but now print media take a back seat to the newer, electronic forms: television, radio, recorded music, movies, mobile phones, electronic games, and the Internet. American children and adolescents use media for an average total of 6.5 hours per day, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation's landmark 2005 study of 8-to-18-year-olds—more time than they spend in school, far more time than they spend with their families. Totals are similar in other industrialized countries.

The fact that media use has become such a central part of the daily experience of children and adolescents all over the world makes this a propitious time to compile the *Encyclopedia of Children, Adolescents, and the Media.* Because the media children and adolescents use are so diverse, and because media use pertains to so many different aspects of children and adolescents' development, this was a monumental project, with the two volumes containing a total of 463 entries. There were 4 associate editors and 19 advisory board members, all of them outstanding scholars in media research. A total of 496 authors contributed entries.

Media are pervasive worldwide as part of children and adolescents' daily experience; accordingly, we sought to make the contents of the encyclopedia international. There are specific regional entries on Asia, Europe, and Latin America, as well as specific country entries for the two most populous countries in the world, China and India, and on Japan, which has been such an important contributor to children's media worldwide. Many of the other entries contain information drawn from a variety of countries.

Many people today, including many media researchers, share Hall's concern that the influences of media on children and adolescents are primarily negative, and this concern is reflected in the contents of the encyclopedia. Two of the largest topic categories are gender and sexuality (47 entries) and violence (31 entries). These entries show that the content of the media consumed by children and adolescents is dominated by sexuality and (especially) violence. Anyone who doubts Freud's theory that sex and aggression are the primary wellsprings of human nature need only spend a day perusing the media environment of the average child or adolescent. Toddlers and children enjoy cartoons wherein the main characters invent humorously creative ways of beating the snot out of each other; girls embrace the models of princess or tart (or princess-tart) offered by cartoon characters and pop stars; boys thrill to electronic games that involve pretending to kill bad guys and aliens; adolescents like best the movies and music that contain the most explicit sexual and violent content.

Although there is little doubt about the content of the media children and adolescents consume, the question of effects has been a challenging one in media research from its inception. Does sexual and violent content influence children and adolescents, or are the children and adolescents who are most attracted to sexual and violent content already different from other children, already more prone to sexual risks and aggression? Different scholars have different answers to this question, and the 37 entries on theories in this encyclopedia offer a variety of takes on it. Still, there is broad consensus among media researchers that media use is not merely correlated with children's development but also influences their development.

I admit that I originally came to this question as a skeptic, having learned in my training as a developmental psychologist to be wary of simple statements of cause and effect. However, eventually I was convinced of the effects of media by the accumulation of evidence—not just correlational or experimental studies but longitudinal studies, field studies, ethnographic studies, and natural experiments—and I believe that most thorough readers of this encyclopedia will be convinced as well, as they read through the entries describing the results of studies that used these different methods. Yes, children and adolescents make media choices based on their individual characteristics, and some more than others prefer sexual and violent content, but the effects of such content on their development are real, and we doubt them at our peril—and our children's peril.

Not only is sexual and violent content a source of concern. Also worrisome is the huge volume of advertising to which children and adolescents are exposed through the media. The 40 entries on advertising offer a wealth of compelling and unsettling details, and like the entries on sex and violence, taken together the entries on advertising leave little doubt about advertising's effects on children and adolescents (and here I can add that, as a parent of twin 6-year-olds who regularly clamor for whatever is relentlessly advertised on the Cartoon Network, I did not need to be convinced). Even schools, formerly places where the barrage of advertising in modern society was kept at bay, have now opened their doors to invite the barrage in, as shown here in entries on topics such as Sponsored Educational Materials and Commercial Television and Radio in Schools.

Given the many concerns about media use among children and adolescents, it is understandable that adults have organized in various ways to address those concerns. The encyclopedia contains entries on 22 advocacy groups, which comprise a wide range of national and international efforts to improve the quality (or at least minimize the damage) of the media content children and adolescents receive. There are also 39 entries in the area of public policy, showing the many approaches that have been taken nationally and internationally to control what media producers market to children and adolescents. In addition, 23 entries in the area of media education describe the methods that have been developed to teach children and adolescents to be discerning consumers of the media that surround them nearly all day every day, and to recognize and defuse media attempts to manipulate their desires, needs, and consumption habits.

Although the weight of opinion in the entries in the encyclopedia is decidedly in the direction of the concerns and potential negative effects of media, many entries show how children and adolescents benefit from their media use. Television may be mostly a vast wasteland saturated with sex and violence, but the best television provides children and adolescents with an entertaining educator and opens their minds and imaginations to new worlds. Music provides children and (especially) adolescents with materials for building personal and group identities and helps them to manage unruly moods. Movies can provide wonderful, inspiring stories. Mobile phones and email allow children and adolescents to connect to a broad network of friends and family much more often than was possible in the past. The Internet is a portal to an infinite store of information about every imaginable topic. Even print media have retained their power to inspire children and adolescents, as the recent *Harry Potter* craze has demonstrated. Who could have predicted that children and adolescents all over the world would become riveted to a series of 500+ page books about a boy who attends a school for wizards? This example helps remind us that media are, at their best, wonderful sources of enjoyment for children, adolescents, and the rest of us.

Although we sought to be as comprehensive as possible in putting together the two volumes of the encyclopedia, we decided early on not to include entries on specific media characters or performers. There were three reasons for this. First, if we had opened the door to this, it would have been difficult to stop (once we had an entry for Metallica, how could we have denied an entry to Megadeth?). Second, notwithstanding the

enduring popularity of characters such as Tom and Jerry or performers such as Madonna, most media characters and performers popular among children and adolescents have a rather short time in the spotlight. (There was a popular singer a few years ago, Britney something—remember her?) They come and go, and entries on them would already seem dated by the time the encyclopedia was published. Third and most important, the focus of the encyclopedia is on children and adolescents' experiences with media rather than on the specific media products they use. If boys are avid players of the electronic game *Grand Theft Auto*, what is important about this, for our purposes, is their avid involvement in a highly violent electronic game, not the fact that the specific game is *Grand Theft Auto.* Next month or next year, another violent electronic game may come along and supersede *Grand Theft Auto* in popularity, but the important issues pertaining to boys' involvement in violent electronic games will endure.

In closing, I would like to thank the many people involved in producing the encyclopedia. First, my eminent associate editors, Jane D. Brown, Keith Roe, L. Monique Ward, and Barbara J. Wilson. They did a fabulous job of helping me assemble the hundreds of authors for the encyclopedia. Each of them edited many of the entries, and each also contributed at least one entry. Second, the 19 advisory board members, who suggested many of the entries we included in the encyclopedia and who were also key in assembling the authors for the project. It was a great honor to work with such a stellar group of media scholars. Third, at Sage Publications, the development editors Eileen Gallaher and Diana Axelsen, and Beth Bernstein, the production editor; all of them were extraordinarily capable in administering the project and getting all the entries into good shape, and they were delightful to work with.

Finally, I would like to dedicate my work on this encyclopedia to the memory of my mother, Marjorie Littlefield Arnett, who entertained us throughout my childhood with a wry running commentary on the stupidity and venality of most advertising, no doubt providing me with a "media education" that endures to this day. This is for you, Mom.

—Jeffrey Jensen Arnett
Clark University

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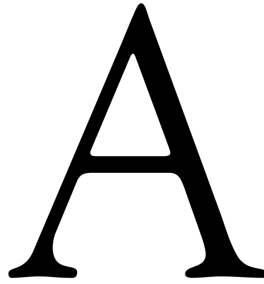

ACTION FOR CHILDREN'S TELEVISION (ACT)

From 1967 until 1992, Action for Children's Television (ACT) served as an advocacy group that fought for high-quality children's television programming. ACT's first meeting was held in December 1967 in the Boston home of Peggy Charren, the group's driving force. The group was formally constituted in 1968. Although ACT was often portrayed as "just" a group of housewives, it was, in fact, built on the corporate model, with annual reports, yearly audits, and a board of directors with legal and financial expertise. Its members, primarily women, represented a wide range of professional experience. ACT was disbanded in 1992 when Charren stepped down as director. However, during its 25 years of activity, the organization was central to the debates on children's television.

During its first years, ACT commissioned research, wrote grants, and gained national attention. One early event involved the picketing of a local television station to restore the popular children's program, *Captain Kangaroo.* The event, complete with entertainment, children, and balloons, led to the return of the program and national media coverage for ACT. Within two years, the group had grown to more than 1,000 members and had formed alliances with other national organizations, such as the National Parent Teacher Association.

The organization's most significant contribution began in the early 1970s, when it filed a petition for rule making with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) outlining the problems with children's television and asking for (1) no sponsorships or commercials on children's television; (2) no host selling or product tie-ins during children's television; and (3) a minimum of 14 hours per week of age-specific programming. This petition was given the docket number 19142 and remained open for almost 14 years. As a result, for the first time in broadcast history, the FCC held broadcasters accountable for children's programming. From Docket 19142 came a series of task forces, hearings, and memoranda. But whereas previous FCC commissioners had made some attempts to regulate children's television, Mark Fowler, chair of the FCC in 1983, believed in reliance on marketplace regulation—change brought about by market demand rather than by government regulation. Finally, after little definitive action, the docket was closed in December 1983. Although little regulation was instituted while the docket was open, ACT had established the importance (and the lack) of quality in children's television. Once the docket was closed, the debate moved to Congress. Here, over a period of nearly 10 years, ACT lobbied representatives, urging them to introduce legislation in the Senate and the House obligating broadcasters to fulfill their public service responsibilities to the child audience. Although a bill that passed in 1988 was subjected to a pocket veto by President Reagan, the Children's Television Act (CTA) was eventually passed in late 1990 and put into law.

Whereas other advocacy groups called for control of content, ACT saw such control as a violation of First Amendment freedoms. At the core of ACT's argument was a belief in broadcasters' legal responsibility to

serve the public according to the 1934 Communications Act, which allowed and licensed broadcasters to use the airwaves in return for serving the public's interest. ACT's attempts to bring change both through the Federal Communications Commission and later through Congress were grounded in this philosophy. The Children's Television Act of 1993 resonates with the 1970 petition, which asked for age-specific programming, a commitment of programming hours, and limits to advertising on children's television, and was based on a belief of broadcasters' responsibility to the child audience.

—Norma Pecora

See also Educational Television, History of; Educational Television, Programming in; Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation; Regulation, Television

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ADOLESCENTS, DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF, AND MEDIA

Adolescence is marked by a number of physical, cognitive, and social changes that interact to create a number of developmental needs specific to this age group. As adolescents seek to define themselves independently of their parents, they often turn to media as sources of self-socialization and of messages about their identity in terms of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. Although parents and peers remain influential during this transition, this entry focuses on adolescents' use of media to navigate developmental changes and cope with the daily difficulties of being teenagers, and on the role of media in shaping adolescents' development of identity and autonomy.

ADOLESCENT TIME SPENT WITH MEDIA

During adolescence, children spend less time with parents and an increasingly large amount of time by themselves, during which they often participate in unsupervised media, such as television, music, and video games. The typical American adolescent listens to music approximately 4 hours a day and watches television approximately 2 hours a day. In addition, 75% of adolescents have access to computers, 61% report surfing the Internet, and 70% of adolescent girls read popular teen magazines. In combination, these media consume approximately 8 hours of adolescents' time each day. Given the vast exposure to media influences, research suggests that media serve a number of developmental purposes for adolescents beyond that of mere entertainment.

DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF ADOLESCENTS

A great deal of research has examined the developmental transitions that children experience as they enter adolescence. These changes can be loosely placed into three main categories: first, physical changes, such as the increased hormonal levels and sexual development characteristic of puberty; second, advances in cognitive development, characterized by increases in abstract thought; and third, social changes, such as changes in relationships with parents and peers. These three areas of adolescent development interact with one another to make adolescence an age of transition characterized by unique developmental needs, for some of which American adolescents may rely more heavily on media as a source of self-socialization. This entry focuses on adolescents' identity development and need for increased autonomy, and on the ways that adolescents use media to facilitate these goals.

ADOLESCENT IDENTITY FORMATION

A primary challenge undertaken during adolescence and emerging adulthood is the formation of an identity distinct from one's parents. This does not necessarily mean that the adolescent will choose an identity that conflicts with that desired by parents, but it does suggest that many adolescents will experience some period of exploration and experimentation as they search for a unique place in the world. In their search

for identity, adolescents may intentionally or unintentionally turn to the media for an understanding of what is socially acceptable. A few of the most salient aspects of identity formation for which adolescents use media as a source of socialization are gender identity, sexual identity, and ethnic identity.

Gender Identity

The media send very clear messages of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman, and sometimes offer exaggerations of gender stereotypes that profoundly influence children's understanding of gender and gender roles. Television sends messages about gender in a number of ways. One message is conveyed by the sheer underrepresentation of woman on television; another by the portrayal of stereotypic occupations of women and men. Although this has changed slightly over the past 20 years, commercial television provides youth with many traditional views of what is masculine and what is feminine and may contribute greatly to the occupational aspirations of teenagers. Research suggests that when gender-stereotyped television is introduced to an area that previously did not have television; the youth in that area become more gender stereotyped. Although this may be true, adolescents may also seek non-gender-stereotyped information on television that leads to emulation of a role model who defies gender stereotypes, such as a female athlete or a male schoolteacher.

In addition to television, video games and magazines may be used by adolescents as a source of information on gender identity. Nearly 99% of video games are targeted toward males and feature violence, loud sound effects, and rapid movement. This includes educational software that emphasizes male themes and plays to the strengths of males. Teen magazines also send clear messages about gender and what it means to be masculine and feminine. Teen magazines set guidelines about body image, fashion, and beauty for young girls. Although girls are generally the target of teen magazines, boys are also increasingly susceptible to the messages about male body image and male orientation toward females that abound in magazines for men and boys. Both males and females seeking to understand how to behave can access multiple sources of media for clear, albeit often misleading, information on gender identity.

Sexual Identity

With the onset of physical changes during adolescence, youth look to media for information about their own sexual identity and sexual behaviors. This may be particularly true for adolescents who are less sexually experienced and who may not be receiving the answers they seek from other socialization sources, such as parents. Magazines provide ample information about what relationships should entail and how one should behave in a sexual relationship. Music with sexual themes and computer or video pornography are also media sources used by adolescents to gain knowledge about sexual roles. Girls commonly turn to romantic television or books to gain ideas of what love and sexuality should look and feel like, and these sources may provide youth with skewed views of sexuality and dating, setting unrealistic expectations.

Although media are a rich source of sexual information for adolescents, they may provide adolescents with sexual values that are contrary to parental values. For example, research has found that the majority of prime-time television contains content of a sexual nature; in most cases, sexual actions and language occur between unmarried couples with little reference to contraception or the potentially negative consequences of sexual activity, such as sexually transmitted diseases. Given that parents often do not provide adolescents with sexual information and that adolescents may feel uncomfortable discussing issues of a sexual nature with their parents, media are an important socialization agent for adolescents seeking information about their sexual identity.

Ethnic Identity

Another salient aspect of adolescent identity development is ethnic identity—adolescents' expression of affinity and pride in their cultures of origin. Adolescents' use of media as sources of information regarding ethnicity may be particularly significant for those who have limited real-life exposure to peers of different ethnicities. Much like gender identity, information provided by the media on ethnic minorities may be highly stereotypical or, conversely, may provide information that combats racial stereotypes. Messages on ethnic identity are prevalent in adolescent music as well as commercial television and movies. In general, television underrepresents the number of minorities in real life and sends messages

that do not reflect the diversity in America. As a result, adolescents may construct ideas about the unimportance of certain ethnic groups, as well as images of how people of other ethnicities are likely to behave.

If adolescents are not exposed to ethnic diversity in their daily lives, media may provide them with the information they seek. The frequent portrayal of minorities as victims or in violent roles on television may encourage intolerance and fear on the part of European American teens, as well as providing, for minority youth, negative stereotypes of what they should aspire to become. Research has found that movies have a great influence on how adolescents perceive those of differing ethnicity. For example, movies that portrayed a minority group in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner were found to make strong impressions on children of all ages, in many cases altering perceptions of people of another race. Minority adolescents also rely heavily on television to provide them with messages, which may or may not be accurate, about European Americans and the values espoused by the majority culture.

AUTONOMY

The adolescent search for an identity distinct from that of parents is characterized by a desire for increased autonomy. Although this desire may be perceived as rebellion, adolescents often turn to media to express their individuality or autonomy. This is often reflected in adolescents' use of private media, which usually takes place in the solitude of their bedrooms. Research suggests that music is a particularly important way in which youth choose to express their differences from their parents. So what may seem like "jungle music" to adults is merely a means by which adolescents exert some control over their growing need for autonomy. In addition, this time alone is used as a means of identifying with a peer culture and as a respite from the emotional roller coaster common during adolescence.

Peer Identification

As adolescents spend less time with parents, they spend more time with peers. Media are sometimes used by adolescents as a means of identifying with their peer group and expressing their autonomy as a peer culture distinct from that of adults. The existence of a distinct peer culture is easily recognized by adults who may seem unaware of popular television programs watched by teens, the latest video game craze, or the most recent music release. The use of media, particularly music, may help adolescents feel a connection to peers in general, regardless of actual association, or may define a particular peer group or crowd. Another way in which adolescents learn about youth culture is through advertisements encouraging them to buy the latest clothing, beauty product, or breakfast cereal. Adolescents are exposed to more than 20 commercials per hour on television and spend $67 billion a year on commercial products. Whether it is a famous athlete advertising breakfast cereal or the latest pop star promoting a particular clothing line, adolescents gain information about peer culture from media advertisements and use this information as a guide to what is popular among youth.

Coping

Research suggests that, as adolescents distance themselves from their parents, their sense of self and, in turn, their self-esteem decrease. Adolescents struggle with who they think they are and who they want to become, and this struggle is often characterized by increased emotionality. Much of this search for autonomy and a sense of self occurs while the adolescent is alone, which is often a time of loneliness and depression. As a result, many adolescents turn to media as a way of coping with the loneliness, frustration, and anger prominent during adolescence. Adolescents use solitary television viewing both to express their autonomy by watching what they choose and to detach themselves from the emotional rigors of the day. The major portion of solitary media time is spent listening to music—65% for early adolescents. Many adolescents report using music not only to unwind but also to explore fantasies, purge anger, express their individuality, and think about relationships as expressed in popular love songs. Research has focused specifically on adolescents' (particularly adolescent males') use of rock or heavy metal music to resonate with their own feelings of frustration and rage. In many cases, adolescents claim that rock music actually helps them to feel happier or improves their emotional state.

—Laura M. Padilla-Walker

See also Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Gender Identity Development; Sexual Information, Internet and; Sexual Information, Teen Magazines and; Youth Culture

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ADOLESCENTS, MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF

Media portrayals contribute to the public's view of teenagers and to teenagers' views of themselves. Different media present very different pictures of adolescent life. This entry considers media portrayals of youth in the news, on dramatic television, in teen magazines, and on the Internet. Although research that looks specifically at adolescents is relatively sparse, some reasonable, though sometimes time bound, conclusions can be drawn.

TEENAGERS IN THE NEWS

In a 2000 study of television news, the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that adolescents received relatively little coverage, with youth-focused stories constituting about 8% of local news and 4% of national news. This research, by Amundson and his colleagues, is one of approximately a dozen studies that have looked at portrayals of adolescents in print and TV news. Across various media (print vs. broadcast), foci (local vs. national coverage), and locales, a persistent finding is that bad news dominates the youth-news agenda. In most cases, crime is far and away the most common focus of news stories about teenagers, although the relative dominance of stories that portray teens as perpetrators, as opposed to victims, appears to fluctuate over time, medium, and locale. Overall, negative, event-based coverage dominates the coverage of teens: Crime, accidents, and risky behaviors—such as drinking, drug use and sexual abuse—accounted for nearly two thirds of all stories in the Amundson study. There are some indications that greater thematic balance can be found on national TV and in some local papers than on local TV news. However, the relative incidence of violent teen crime in local papers still tends to far outstrip its real-world occurrence. For instance, one study of major newspapers in California found that 25% of all youth stories were about youth violence at a time when 3% of young people in the state either perpetrated or became victims of violent crime.

Researchers have also located some noteworthy sex-, age-, and race-based differences in news portrayals of adolescents. Amundson and his colleagues found that males were about three times more likely than females to be the subjects of TV news stories about teens. This overrepresentation of males also appears in crime news, where 80% of TV crime stories about teens involved males. When females were represented, however, they were nearly as likely as males to appear in crime stories. High-school-age teens appear to be covered more frequently than middle-school or post-high-school youth, and, as teens get older, crime and risky behavior increasingly dominate the picture. Whereas crime is prominent in coverage of all demographic groups, African Americans and Hispanics tend to fare worse than their white counterparts. Amundson and his colleagues found that crime stories accounted for more than 50% of the segments in which nonwhite youth appeared, versus 35% for whites. In a 2001 review of the research on all forms of media coverage of youth violence, Dorfman and Schiraldi concluded that news coverage of crime, especially violent crime, is not proportionate to its occurrence and that it presents a distorted view of the percentage of overall crimes committed. They also found that minority perpetrators were overrepresented in crime coverage, whereas minority victims were underrepresented.

The high prevalence of crime in news portrayals of youth has raised concerns about the potential effects of this coverage on public perception and, ultimately, on crime-related policies. Numerous studies have shown dramatic increases in crime coverage during periods when actual crime rates are steady or in decline. Correlational studies have tied the prevalence of crime coverage to public perceptions of actual crime rates and to support for policies that punish the perpetrators but ignore deeper societal roots of crime. It is not only the overrepresentation of crime news that concerns researchers; it is also the form of this coverage. Several studies have shown that the overwhelming majority of crime stories focus on individual criminal acts and largely ignore discussions of causes and solutions. By

The 1946 film *Margie* held on to playful mythologies about teenage life before later post-war movies confronted darker adolescent issues. As evident in this ad, the story nostalgically celebrates its heroine's spirited days in high school during the Roaring Twenties through her crush on a teacher and her conflicted recognition of women's rights. Many movies about adolescents employ a similar sentimental appreciation of earlier days when teenage life was supposedly sweeter, even if the teens are far from carefree or innocent, as in *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *The Outsiders* (1983), *School Ties* (1992), and *Lords of Dogtown* (2005).

omitting the broader public health context in which individual acts are situated, news stories may reinforce a consistent human bias toward attributing the causes of youth crime to dispositional traits of youth offenders and toward ignoring the societal conditions that lead some teens to commit criminal acts and others to avoid them. Indeed, experimental studies have shown that stories that focus on the characteristics of individual actors tend to forestall consideration of broader societal causes of and solutions to social problems. Some efforts are being made to bring a public health, or epidemiological, perspective into the newsroom and to refocus the coverage of youth crime on the environmental factors—poverty, access to guns, substandard schools, dysfunctional families, lack of community policing, and so forth—that promote higher crime rates.

In addition to their appearance in such "bad news" stories, teens frequently enter the news window through coverage of educational funding, policy, and practice and, to a lesser extent, in their roles as athletes. Teens also figure in stories on health issues, such as school immunization programs, nutrition, and obesity problems among youth, as well as in stories about individual health problems. Much less frequent are stories about teens engaged in community service; and, of the more than 8,000 local news stories analyzed by Amundson and his colleagues, fewer than 10 dealt with employment- or career-related issues of teenagers. In that study, teen females were about 50% more likely than males to appear in family and lifestyle stories, and no nonwhite youth were pictured or explicitly mentioned in stories about health.

The news portrayal of teens depends, of course, on genre. In business segments and sections, teens are most often cast as consumers. In contrast to the prevalent hard-news portrayal of teens as either perpetrators and risk takers or as vulnerable victims, the business news depicts teens as a powerful and virtuous force, one that makes or breaks the latest movie, gaming technology, or clothing line. The business news is also the place where one is most

apt to find the entire cohort of 13-to-19-year-olds grouped in terms of its age-based identity. Whereas hard-news stories often describe *individual* members of this group according to their status as "teenagers," the business perspective characterizes this collectivity as the "teen market." From this viewpoint, it is the product preferences and buying habits of teens that distinguish this group from other age-based cohorts and that become the defining characteristic of adolescent identity.

The overall pattern of news coverage shows that, outside of their roles as criminals, risk takers, and athletes, and in their collective guise as a vital market segment, teens in the news are rarely portrayed as proactive social agents. They tend to be shown, rather, as victims or potential victims of social policies or, less frequently, as beneficiaries of social programs. The "beneficiary" story tends to focus on organizations and programs that rescue and revive at-risk teens. Similarly, in coverage of education, teens tend to serve, not as social actors in worlds of their own, but as exemplars of groups of students who will be affected in one way or another by the decisions of powerful others.

This bird's-eye view of the largely grim and powerless roles afforded teenagers in their appearances on the stage of current affairs has implications that go beyond the stereotypes and policy preferences such stories may foster in adult readers. Teens themselves spend a small and declining portion of their time reading newspapers, and when they do, they prefer comics, sports, and entertainment sections to hard news. Researchers, meanwhile, have suggested links between the early adoption of news-reading practices and the subsequent development of news-reading habits, political sophistication, and intentions to become civically engaged. Whether the portrayal of disempowered teens presented in the news discourages early news reading is a question that researchers might fruitfully address.

Efforts to incorporate a public health perspective into coverage of teens may help boost consideration of the causes and cures of the problems faced and instigated by adolescents. However, the general tendency to portray teens as problems reflects a broader tendency of news media to focus on conflict and elite points of view. The civic journalism movement represents one attempt to refocus the lens through which journalists view their respective news beats in ways that not only bring solution-focused stories into the news repertoire but also allow audiences, including youth, to have a say in setting the news agenda. Whether this initiative is changing the youth beat in ways that also draw young viewers and readers and into the fold waits to be seen.

TEENAGERS ON TELEVISION

Among the hundreds of content analyses of entertainment television, only a handful have focused on the portrayal of adolescents**.** The dearth of research in this area is surprising given the strong rationale provided by historically dominant models in the media effects literature, notably Gerbner's cultivation theory and Bandura's social learning theory. The focus placed by cultivation research on the beliefs formed about *others* suggests a need to analyze the influence of TV's portrayal of teens on the beliefs that both teens and non-teens form about real-world teenagers. Bandura's focus on vicarious modeling suggests the need to analyze how TV's portrayal of teens influences teenagers' *own* attitudes and behaviors: As experimental research has shown, teens are more apt to emulate the behavior of models with whom they share certain similarities, such as age. Generalizations based on the data that do exist are time bound, impressionistic, and/or restricted to the particular facets of teenage life that researchers have chosen to examine.

Signorielli examined several characteristics of adolescent characters on prime-time TV in an analysis of aggregated data for the years 1969 through 1985. She found that adolescents were consistently underrepresented relative to their real-world counterparts: Whereas the 10-to-19-year-old age group constituted roughly 15% of the U.S. population, this cohort of TV characters accounted for about 8% of the prime-time population. The male–female ratio in prime time during this period tended to favor males in all age groups: Among teenage characters, males outnumbered females by about three to two. Signorielli also analyzed the relative chances of being a perpetrator versus a victim of violence. She found that adolescents, particularly females, were proportionately more likely to be victimized than were middle-age characters. The author interprets these findings as measures of social power and status, concluding that, relative to middle-age adults, teens—particularly females—are neglected and devalued on television. In this respect, Signorielli's conclusions echo those of Peck, who had previously concluded that TV's youth are played for laughs, shown as subordinate to adults, or portrayed as victims.

In another analysis, however, Signorielli compared role type (good vs. bad; successful vs. unsuccessful).

Here, she found that adolescents were more likely than middle-age characters to be presented as good and as successful. Family life was also found to be particularly important for younger adolescents, with 8 of 10 characters between the ages of 10 and 14 shown interacting with family members during prime-time hours. Thus, whereas teen characters were relatively sparse and powerless, they were also shown as benign, family oriented, and effective in their endeavors.

A study by Wilson and her colleagues analyzed programs aired between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. across 23 different channels in 1995. This research was designed to examine whether the characteristics of violence on television are those that psychological theory suggests are likely to prompt viewers to model the violent acts. It nonetheless yields some interesting data on the characteristics of TV's portrayals of violent teenagers. Across the 2,500 hours of television included in this sample, teen perpetrators aggressed about once every 2.5 hours, and 7% of all offenders were youth between the ages of 13 and 20. Of these teen perpetrators, 81% were male, 56% were "good" characters, and 60% of their victims were other teenagers. These data do not reveal the likelihood of teen characters engaging violent or aggressive acts. However, these and other data collected in the study suggest that the characteristics of TV's violent teens are those likely to provoke peer-directed aggression by male teen viewers.

Wilson's data also reveal that viewers are most likely to find violent teenagers in movies (44% of all teen violence) and children's programs (32%) and are much less likely to encounter teen violence in drama (7%) or comedy (2%). Thirteen percent of teen violence occurred in music videos. These genre-related differences indicate that viewers' take-home message about the characteristics of teenagers depends very much on the programming preferences of viewers.

In one of the few studies to examine a broader range of teenage characterizations on TV, Heintz-Knowles examined prime-time entertainment programs airing on the six broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, WB, and UPN) in 1999. The author looked at the kinds of problems facing prime-time teens, the way these teens deal with problems, the activities they tend to engage in, the youth-oriented issues they tend to discuss, and their rates of alcohol and drug use.

The problems dealt with by teens tended to relate to romance, friendships, and family issues, whereas problems related to work, learning, and personal health were rare. Violence and drugs accounted for a very small portion of the problems faced by teenage characters: Only 4% of youth characters were involved in story lines in which the central conflict was an act of violence.

The main problems faced by teens were satisfactorily solved about 50% of the time. The rest of the time, the problem was either left unresolved at the end of an episode or resolved in a fashion that ran counter to the character's wishes. In about four of five successful problem-solving attempts, the solution was the result of a collective effort, with friends, family, teachers, and other adults chipping in. Just who these teen problem-solvers relied upon depended upon problem type. For instance, peers were much more likely than adults to be recruited to help with problems related to friendships. Teen characters were most often shown to solve problems without adult help in teen-centric programs. Generally, teens often showed concern for those in need of assistance.

As primary activities, teens in the prime-time programs analyzed by Heintz-Knowles most often socialize at school and "hang out" away from school, usually in characters' homes. They are frequently shown doing schoolwork but nearly always as a background activity. Work, chores, and making out are other common background activities. Although 9% of the characters are shown drinking or using drugs, these episodes are clustered in 5 of the 45 programs included in the study. About 12% of characters participated in some form of extracurricular activity.

Finally, the discussions of youth-oriented issues engaged in by teenagers were dominated by issues of romance, family, social pressures, sex, and school. Societal-level problems were notably absent from these discussions. On a similar note, social institutions such as government, business, and social agencies were hardly visible in prime-time programming.

In a study of teens' favorite dramatic programs, Strange, Christenson, & Roberts focused on those aspects of programming related to significant developmental tasks and risks of adolescence. They examined, inter alia, relationships with parents and with mentors, orientation toward learning and toward the future, sex and romance, body image, fitness, and mental and physical health. Although limited to the 2001–2002 season under study, these data allow several generalizations about the portrayal of teens on the programs most popular among 12-to-17-year-old viewers.

Today's TV families confront more teen-relevant issues than the TV families of old: Teen sex, underage

drinking, thong underwear, abortion, and coping with a parent's remarriage all make appearances as central issues in the plots of teen TV. Although parent-teen conflict is prevalent, it tends to occur in an environment of constructive engagement rather than alienated detachment. Cases of outright dysfunction tend to appear as satire (e.g., *The Simpsons, Malcolm in the Middle*) or to be held up as regrettable aberrations (*ER, CSI*) rather than models to be emulated.

Teenage characters do enter into mentoring relationships with nonfamilial adults; however, these relationships tend to be brief rather than long-term and are clustered among just a few of teens' favorite shows (especially *7th Heaven* and *Boston Public*).

Schools are a common backdrop in teen-centric programs. The most common orientation to schooling portrayed on these programs is one of commitment to a required endeavor, one that is sometimes deemed important but is rarely viewed as desirable. Only a few programs (e.g., *Malcolm in the Middle*) show teens to be bored outright with school; however, depictions of teens who truly enjoy learning (e.g., *Gilmore Girls*'s Rory) are even less common. Little focus is placed on what is being learned or on the relevance of the subject matter to society or to teens' lives. *Boston Public* provides one exception, in which the topics students engage in their classes sometimes spill over to the issues they confront in their lives.

The college plans of teenagers are discussed in about 15% of episodes in which teen characters are present. However, the kinds of career exploration one might hope to see in adolescents were largely absent from these programs. More generally, little attention is paid to the future-directed concerns of teens in the programs they most frequently watch.

Teens' favorite programs acknowledge the reality of teen sexual activity but offer mixed messages about teen sex and romance. Previous intercourse by teenage characters was referred to in about 18% of the episodes studied. The messages inherent in these portrayals are highly inconsistent. "Lessons" range from "Virginity is a sign that a boy is a loser" to "Teens don't need to be sexually active to be cool." The programs depict attractive teen role models who intentionally wait to have sex, those who just can't wait to have sex, and those who don't wait to have sex. Discussions of safe sex are largely lost between programs that ignore teen sex and those that treat it as a given.

As in most of television, teen TV programmers tend to cast svelte, attractive females and, to a lesser extent, handsome and "buff" males: No heavier-than-average characters were cast in leading roles in teens' favorite programs during 2001–2002. Teens are rarely depicted engaging in physical exercise. Still rarer are expressions of its many benefits, be they the pure enjoyment of sports, the camaraderie, or the payoffs in terms of health and appearance.

The teens on teen TV are shown to grapple with troubling life predicaments, but rarely do they experience serious mental disorders. Those that do tend to play visiting roles on crime shows like *CSI,* where they take their place alongside pathological criminals of all ages. The incidence of the mental disorders that most frequently beset teenagers appears to be significantly lower in the world of TV teens than in their real-world counterparts. Although some experts have worried that stories provide alluring models of the sorts of "oppositional defiance" often associated with the teen years, this worry finds little support in teens' favorite TV programs. Whereas a few characters do exhibit such anger, resentment, and spite, such states are typically presented as ones to avoid rather than emulate. Finally, this study did find a few instances in which young characters consulted mental health professionals: These portrayals were about equally likely to support as to counter the stigma associated with counseling.

Teens tend not to be politically inquisitive or politically involved. They are rarely shown volunteering or engaging in social service activities. Their lives are centered around school, home, and the social activities of peer groups; when these spheres overlap the civic sphere, it tends to be in small-town environments, like that found in *Everwood,* where the private and public are naturally intertwined.

For those interested in assessing the effects of television—on modeling, group norms, social comparison, and the like—a strong caveat must accompany generalized descriptions of TV's teens. The ongoing proliferation of programming choices has led to a plethora of viewing niches, each with its own profile of teenagers. For instance, the TV diets of male and female teenagers differ significantly from each other, as do the portrayals of teens on the programs they tend to view. Based on viewing data, a case can be made that the models of teens on shows watched by teenage girls (e.g., *Gilmore Girls, 7th Heaven)* are more conducive to healthy development than those on the shows watched by teenage boys (e.g., *Family Guy, Tick, The Simpsons*). These differences are most pronounced on cable programs, where the trend toward niche

programming is stronger. Top shows for girls during the 2002–2003 season were programs like *Lizzie McGuire, Sister-Sister,* and *Clueless.* Boys, on the other hand, preferred shows like *X-Men, Jackie Chan,* and *Justice League.* Group-based differences in programming diets are also apparent when comparing the top TV draws for black, white, and Hispanic teenagers, and when comparing the favorite programs of teenagers and adults. Whereas teen characters are much less likely to populate the programs preferred by adults, those that do appear are more likely to be of the troubled variety found on *CSI* than the wise and gregarious sort found on *Gilmore Girls.* In sum, the image of teens that particular viewers take away from their TV experiences depends very much on what they watch.

TEENS AS REFLECTED IN TEEN MAGAZINES

Whereas the development of niche programming is a recent development in television, magazines have long catered to the distinctive interests of teenagers, particularly teenage girls. Since the 1940s debut of *Seventeen,* teen-centric magazines have been a staple of the American girl's media diet. Although boys spend as much time as girls reading magazines, boys' interests are captured by specialized fare that caters more to particular hobbies, such as electronic gaming and sports. No magazines targeted toward teenage boys have approached the market penetration of girls' magazines such as *Seventeen, Cosmo Girl,* and *Teen People,* which are regularly read by between 50% and 70% of teenage girls in the United States.

Research has focused on magazines targeted toward teenage girls and has been motivated primarily by concerns surrounding sexuality and sex-role socialization. Although this research has rarely looked exclusively at the portrayals of the adolescents in teen magazines, the narrow targeting of these publications suggests that their content can be viewed as a portrayal, if not an accurate and balanced reflection, of teen interests. On this reading, the interests these magazines cater to—and likely bolster—are dominated by fashion, beauty, celebrities, romance, and sex. In one study of the most popular teen magazines from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s, Walsh-Childers and her colleagues also found a substantial focus on messages related to sexual health—especially contraception, pregnancy, and STDs—and sexual decision making. During the 1993–1996 period, teen girls' magazines devoted about the same number of column inches to articles whose primary focus was sexual health (42 inches per issue) as they did to articles whose primary focus was sex (45 inches), a category that included articles about whether or not to have sex. The authors also found, however, that the space devoted to non-health sex-related content had increased from a 1986–1989 baseline at a rate much faster than that devoted to sexual health coverage. Teens, then, are implicitly portrayed as sexually active or as grappling with the benefits and risks—physical and emotional—of sexual intercourse. Surveys cited by Walsh-Childers and her colleagues indicate that high-school-age girls seek out this information, which, a sizeable majority report, is not available to them elsewhere. A broadening of the teen magazine market in the late 1990s included the launch of titles aimed toward smaller demographic niches, including ethnic groups, and broader interests than those reflected in fashion, beauty, and romance titles like *Seventeen.*

TEENS AND THE INTERNET

The increasing popularity of the Internet has brought with it a considerable broadening of the images of youth that are available to all audiences. Commercial websites mimic the offerings of the print versions of newspapers and magazines, and "podcasts" of radio and TV fare are allowing on-demand access to the vast libraries of fare available in those media. Added to these traditional offerings are images of youth that represent a variety of portrayals and viewpoints that parallels the diversity of teenage life to an extent not seen in earlier media. Written by teens, for teens, and often about teens, e-zines can be found for "grrls" of all sociopolitical persuasions. Personal Web pages and blogs allow the broad dissemination of autobiographical images and expressions of self in the form of photos, biographical descriptions, essays, and poems. Virtual communities and online social networks provide a media space in which teens locate others with similar interests and which are increasingly seen as lenses through which both teens and adults form their impressions of teenagers. This explosion of teen-centric expression makes it increasingly difficult to generalize about the portrayal of adolescents in the media as these portrayals become ever more varied. In similar fashion, as teens increasingly author their

own portrayals and audiences settle in on this or that programming niche, it seems likely that the images of teens held in popular consciousness will grow progressively more diverse.

—*Jeffrey J. Strange*

See also Adolescents, Movie Portrayals of; African Americans, Media Images of; Latina/os, Media Images of

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ADOLESCENTS, MOVIE PORTRAYALS OF

During the first decades of cinema, adolescents sporadically had roles in many American films, such as *Seventeen* (1916), *Harold Teen* (1928), and *Wild Boys of the Road* (1933). However, a more coherent genre of teen film was just beginning to form when young stars like Deanna Durbin and Mickey Rooney achieved fame in the late 1930s. Durbin had such hits as *Three Smart Girls* (1936) and *That Certain Age* (1938), and Rooney played popular teenager Andy Hardy in a franchise that started with *A Family Affair* (1937) and continued for many years. These films largely showcased the plucky nature of youth, avoiding such

realistic yet controversial teen topics as sex, alcohol and drug use, and crime. Then, as the Depression era gave way to World War II, more films about troubled teens began to appear. The most prominent example was an unlikely franchise about a group of hardened if often honorable delinquents, the Dead End Kids, which began in 1937. Still, it was after the war that Hollywood began to address serious youth issues more consistently, and with adolescents emerging as a social force, they also became the target audience of the film industry.

America's fascination with juvenile delinquency became evident in two 1949 films, *City Across the River* and *Knock on Any Door,* both directly addressing the problem of teen crime. Films of the 1950s would expand upon these themes in sensational fare such as *On the Loose* (1951) and *Problem Girls* (1953) and in more respectable productions such as *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). *Rebel* spoke about current teen tensions in sincere tones rather than didactic monologues, showcasing youth trying to discover themselves and declare their identity within the prosperous torments of the postwar world. *Blackboard Jungle* used the more typical yet no less powerful scenario of an inspiring teacher gaining authority over his unruly charges, and introduced an altogether new phenomenon of the adolescent experience, rock-and-roll music.

Issues beyond delinquency became the focus of other adolescent depictions, such as the sexual tensions that characterized *The Unguarded Moment* (1956), in which a high school student lusts after his teacher, and *Tea and Sympathy* (1956), one of the first teen films to deal, albeit implicitly, with the subject of adolescent homosexuality. Meanwhile, more distinct subgenres of teen films were forming. Beach movies became popular after the release of *Gidget* (1959) and *Where the Boys Are* (1960) and attained their greatest popularity with a series of films starring Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello, beginning with *Beach Party* (1963). The adolescent horror tale genre also took shape in *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957), *Teenage Zombies* (1960), and *Teenage Strangler* (1964). Even melodrama became a popular form of teenage storytelling, with *Blue Denim* (1959) addressing the taboo yet not uncommon problem of teen pregnancy and *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) examining sexual repression. By the early 1960s, Hollywood was clearly telling society that adolescence was only occasionally filled with fun and frolic, as adolescent characters were more often confronting deeper internal anguish, family problems, and cultural intolerance.

Such strife continued for adolescents through many films over the next decade, as best evidenced by the fragile teenagers in *Last Summer* (1969) and *The Last Picture Show* (1971), and especially the victimized girls in *The Exorcist* (1973) and *Taxi Driver* (1976). This mature discourse carried well into other 1970s teen films that addressed such topics as the loss of virginity (*The Summer of '42,* 1971), homosexuality (*Ode to Billy Joe,* 1976), pregnancy and abortion (*Grease,* 1978), and even religious and class conflict (*Saturday Night Fever,* 1977). When *Rich Kids* appeared in 1979, its story of a young teenage boy and girl who react to their divorced parents by forming an adult sexual relationship of their own seemed relatively common for the time.

Then as the 1970s gave way to the 1980s, the teen film genre faced a paradox: It became more popular and more prolific than ever before, and yet this new growth was largely regressive in its address of adolescents themselves. As movie theaters were converted to multiplexes in retail centers, they drew young crowds who were treated to a wide menu of story options. Horror became one of the first noticeable subgenres of the teen film to re-emerge at this time, with its psychopaths killing off sexually active youth in tales like *Halloween* (1978), *Friday the 13th* (1980), *Slumber Party Massacre* (1982), and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), films that were moral parables about the dangers of teenage transgressions. Films about adolescents using science also become popular for a short time, as teenagers were gaining competence with computers and video games. These characters were almost exclusively male and usually quite smart, although adult authority tended to suppress their potential, as seen in *WarGames* (1983), *The Last Starfighter* (1984), *My Science Project* (1985), *Real Genius* (1985), and *The Manhattan Project* (1986).

By far the most visible and most discussed of the 1980s teen subgenres was the sex comedy, which depicted sexually active adolescents in a reactionary mode that countered the Reagan era's moral conservatism. The majority of these films were nonetheless decidedly negative in their portrayals, demonstrating the complications of sex as well as its disappointments, confusions, and potential dangers. This was certainly the case in *Little Darlings* (1980), in which a girl quickly regrets losing her virginity, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982), in which a girl has an

abortion after two embarrassing sexual encounters, and *Risky Business* (1983), in which a boy enlists the services of a prostitute and watches his life fall apart thereafter. Indeed, sex may have been fun for some adolescents in these films, but it carried serious consequences, and by the mid-1980s, under the threat of AIDS and a rise in teenage pregnancies, movies could no longer make light of adolescent sexual experience.

The mid-1980s films of John Hughes also took the adolescent experience rather seriously, yet lacked the sexually explicit content, and came to represent the classic white, middle-class experience of youth during the decade. Starting with *Sixteen Candles* (1984), Hughes wrote and/or directed teenage characters as substantive, sincere, and shrewd, a winning formula that gave adolescents of the era a welcome portrait of themselves and their cohort. He followed with *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Weird Science* (1985), *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), *Pretty in Pink* (1986), and *Some Kind of Wonderful* (1987), films representing a relatively wide variety of adolescent experiences, from dating, family, and school to issues of sex, class, and education.

By the late 1980s, the boom in the teen genre had slowed, with many movies then gaining popularity through home video rather than at the box office. Still, film depictions of adolescents had again taken on a more mature quality relative to the decade's earlier sex sprees and horror fests. Movies like *River's Edge* (1987) examined adolescent anomie in gripping detail; *Heathers* (1989) satirized the notion of high school popularity using murder and suicide; *Pump Up the Volume* (1990) revealed high school as a force that actually disenfranchises young people.

Thus, in the early 1990s the teen genre seemed well due for another serious engagement with social issues. Films like *Boyz N the Hood* (1991) and *Straight Out of Brooklyn* (1991) depicted young African American characters fighting for their lives in crime-ridden urban milieus under the hegemony of a racist legal and political system and under difficult family and social conditions. Films that followed in this vein also addressed race, youth, and delinquency, such as *Juice* (1992), *Menace II Society* (1993), *Above the Rim* (1994), *Fresh* (1994), *New Jersey Drive* (1995), and *Clockers* (1995). As with other genre cycles, though, the topic faded from films after a few years, and the film industry once again grew disinterested in exploring the lives and cultures of African American youth.

Subsequently, teen films in general developed a new comfort with crucial adolescent issues, looking at sexual orientation (*The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love,* 1994; *Edge of Seventeen,* 1999), gender oppression (*Girls Town,* 1996; *Boys Don't Cry,* 1999), and the postmodern nature of teen films in general (*Scream,* 1996; *Not Another Teen Movie,* 2001). In the surest sign of change since the 1980s, teens on screen began having sex again, learning to explore their sexual practices and endeavoring actually to enjoy the process, as in an unlikely trio of films from 1999: *Cruel Intentions, American Pie,* and *Coming Soon.*

Curiously, the one topic that became the most sensitive—and then essentially forbidden—was juvenile delinquency. The dominant issue of teen films since the 1950s, from the mid-1990s onward delinquency became increasingly difficult to address, primarily due to the real-life violence of numerous school shootings by students. After the Columbine killings in 1999, very few teen films dealing with delinquency were released, and fewer still became hits; this was especially true of those dealing with violence, such as *Light It Up* (1999), *O* (2001), and *Elephant* (2003).

To their credit, many teen films of recent years have taken on other issues important to adolescents, such as family conflict (*The Virgin Suicides,* 2000), homophobia (*But I'm a Cheerleader,* 2000), pedophilia (*L.I.E.,* 2001), mental illness (*Donnie Darko,* 2001), body image (*Real Women Have Curves,* 2002), drug abuse and self-mutilation (*Thirteen,* 2003), and religion (*Saved!* 2004). These films continue the depiction of youth growing into increasingly savvy and self-aware young people. To their discredit, some teen films of the current era still actively exploit teenage fears and fascinations for profit: *Kids* (1995), *Wild Things* (1997), *Bully* (2001), *Swimfan* (2002), *What a Girl Wants* (2003), *Lords of Dogtown* (2005). Such films still seem inevitable as long as the media industries encourage adolescents to enjoy their own exploitation. Fortunately, recent adolescent depictions are often more educational than exploitative.

—Timothy Shary

See also Adolescents, Media Portrayals of; Childhood, Media Portrayals of; Horror Films; Regulation, Movies

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ADULT MEDIATION OF ADVERTISING EFFECTS

Active mediation is the most direct means of intervention among the four ways in which scholars commonly believe that parents and significant others influence the uses and effects of media among children and adolescents. The other methods are behavioral modeling, general communication norms, and rule making.

Scholars consider mediation of advertising an especially important form of parental influence, theorizing that the media serve as a bridge from the home to the larger society. Without parental guidance, persuasive media messages can become a child's most authoritative source of information. This occurs because children tend to believe that the media exist to entertain them, educate them, and tell them the truth—even though most media exist to make a profit, sell products, and advocate ideas. In addition, adolescents use media heavily as credible, appealing referents to guide them through the process of developing their identities and independence.

Scholars study mediation under the assumption that it should provide a particularly powerful counterweight to such media influences as advertising, but most studies have found relatively modest relationships between mediation frequency and such outcomes as children's interpretations of media content. This could be because operationalizations of mediation often have not seemed powerful enough to tap into the mechanisms of influence, partly due to their generality. Studies that gather more specific measures of parent-child discussion tend to find larger effects. Some scholars also have suggested that modest findings may indicate that most discussion of media is haphazard rather than purposeful. In addition, researchers continue to wrestle with the advantages and disadvantages of measuring mediation behavior from a parent's or child's point of view, which often differ.

To the extent that parents discuss advertising critically by analyzing its realism (including accuracy and truthfulness), values, and relevance, they can enhance children's skepticism of persuasive messages. They also can increase children's understanding of more truthful and useful content. This contributes to the child's functional communication competence—the ability to use communication resources, such as the media, strategically. Although adolescents rely on parents less than children do as sources of information and reinforcement, studies have shown that parents can continue to provide an important balancing influence to the media for them.

Currently, two approaches dominate the conceptualization of mediation. One, developed by Valkenburg and colleagues, considers rule-making behavior, which is relatively scarce, as a type of mediation, calling it *restrictive mediation*. It then combines reinforcement and counter-reinforcement of messages in a single construct, *instructive mediation*, which closely parallels a general measure of mediation developed by Austin known as *active mediation* and the construct *evaluative guidance* developed by Bybee, Robinson, and Turow. Valkenburg and colleagues also include *social coviewing* as a form of mediation, composed of coviewing behaviors, motivations and affirmative communication.

Another approach developed by Austin and colleagues breaks Austin's original active mediation construct into two types to help explain seemingly anomalous findings in which parental mediation has predicted undesirable outcomes. This approach distinguishes between *positive mediation* (affirmative comments that reinforce content as realistic, representative, enjoyable, relevant, and morally correct) and *negative mediation* (comments that question the content's

realism, truthfulness, accuracy, representativeness, relevance, or moral correctness). Research has indicated that mediation without any valence can be misinterpreted or can backfire.

Austin asserts that scholars should examine coviewing and rule making as conceptually distinct from mediation. According to this view, coviewing without discussion does not mediate anything, because it is a passive activity. Studies have shown that children often interpret coviewing of advertising as endorsement of the messages. In addition, because parents often use rule making to avoid discussion of content, rule making can represent avoidance rather than true mediation, and many children circumvent house rules by using forbidden material at friends' houses. When these children see persuasive messages, they will be less prepared to evaluate them critically. Indeed, some researchers have found that more rule making associates with less comprehension of advertising. What matters more than rules, some scholars suggest, is how rules are made, which reflects general communication norms.

Some inconsistencies exist in the literature regarding demographic correlates of mediation, but they tend to explain little regarding mediation patterns. Instead, parents' general communication styles and specific concerns about media tend to predict their mediation patterns. Research using Austin and colleagues' conceptualization has found that parents may use positive or negative mediation or a combination of the two mediation styles. Parents tend to employ negative mediation when concerned about media influence or skeptical of media messages. Parents tend to use positive mediation and social coviewing when they have a low level of skepticism and positive attitudes toward television in general. Positive mediators watch more television and more often watch together with the children. Negative mediators tend to watch less television and exhibit more skepticism, with much negative mediation occurring when the television is off. In some cases, positive mediation seems to occur out of a concern that condemning or countering messages might threaten family harmony. Fujioka and Austin found that the extent to which parents emphasize conformity and harmony in the household associates with positive mediation, whereas the extent to which parents welcome controversy and open discussion correlates with both negative and positive mediation.

Negative mediation seems to have protective effects with relevance to advertising, with or without demographic characteristics controlled. Although parents can use positive mediation selectively, and negative mediators often use positive mediation as well, research suggests that positive mediation can be counterproductive. In a study with third, sixth, and ninth graders, for example, positive mediation predicted higher expectancies for alcohol use, a greater desire to emulate characters in alcohol ads, and a stronger belief in the realism of the advertising. Negative mediation, on the other hand, predicted lower levels of expectancies for alcohol use. Positive mediation also has been shown to associate with higher levels of advertising desirability and expectancies for alcohol, even among college students, for whom parental influence presumably has waned. Some studies have found that negative mediation helps to activate skepticism toward advertising when critical-viewing skills are present but dormant. It also associates with fewer purchase requests, less materialism, and less parent-child conflict over potential purchases.

Scholars continue to work to clarify and strengthen conceptualizations and operationalizations of parental mediation. In addition, research is exploring the implications of mediation by peers. Some projects are applying the principles of mediation to studies of media literacy education in which influencers are adults or peers. This body of work suggests that discussion-based interventions can dampen the persuasive effects of advertising while enhancing the usefulness of educational content.

—Erica Weintraub Austin

See also Adult Mediation Strategies; Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Coviewing; Family Communication Patterns Model; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Media Literacy; Message Interpretation Process Model; Parenting Styles

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ADULT MEDIATION STRATEGIES

The word *mediate* means to intervene between two parties. To mediate children's media use, then, requires adults to intervene between children and media messages. The idea that there are mediation strategies implies that mediation is an intentional act. The three goals of adult mediation are to prevent negative media effects, to enhance positive effects, and to make children more critical media users. However, adult mediation of the way children interpret media messages is not always intentional. Children frequently see others' incidental comments and actions toward media.

Intentional or not, research has documented three basic types of adult mediation. The first is *restrictive mediation,* defined as parents' rules that seek to control the amount of media use (e.g., restricting TV to one hour per day), types of media content used (e.g., no violent shows), or the viewing environment, including where and when media can be used (e.g., restricting Internet surfing to a public room in the house). The notion refers to formally stated rules that are consistently enforced, but there is some difference in perspective here. Although many parents believe that they consistently restrict their children's media use, young children seldom report this to be so. Unless parents say that they are making a rule and explicitly enforce it, young children may not recognize their parents' mediation efforts.

The second type of mediation is called *coviewing*—use of media by adults and children together. Obviously, this strategy was identified in research on television viewing, but it can be applied to any medium. There is some disagreement, though, as to whether coviewing constitutes intentional mediation. Some have argued that most parent-child coviewing is coincidental; the parent happens to be watching a program, and the child chooses to view too. Others suggest that this act implies that the parent approves of the child's viewing the program. Hence, adults need not say anything during the show to influence children's interpretation of its message.

A third type of mediation is called *instructive mediation,* or talk about media content. Many have used the word *instructive* to refer to purposeful comments directed to children. An example might be a parent who sees a supermodel on television and says, "I don't know anyone who looks that thin. That's not how real women look." Many believe, though, that parents' inadvertent comments during viewing (such as a skeptical "hmph" during a commercial) also constitute instructive mediation. It is important to note that these comments can be positive (such as an adult's admiring comments about a celebrity) as well. If one intends to influence children's interpretation of media content, there is limited evidence that it is more effective to use statements with younger children ("That person is being very selfish.") and questions with older children ("Why do you think that person did that?").

Of the three strategies, parents report using restrictive mediation most frequently. Most national surveys by private foundations (such as the Kaiser Family Foundation or the Annenberg Public Policy Center) show that about three fourths of parents say that they consistently use restrictive mediation. Coviewing is usually reported as the second most used strategy, though most television coviewing only occurs during evening hours when parents watch shows they enjoy. Most studies that investigate instructive mediation ask parents how frequently they engage in various intentional discussions of media content. However, when

answering such questions, parents may not be thinking about the passing comments they make. It is hard to gauge how much more instructive mediation this adds to the mix, particularly if children do not pay attention to such comments.

Several factors influence how often adults use each of these strategies. One of the strongest influences seems to be parents' existing attitudes toward media's potential effects on children. Those with strong beliefs that television can lead to bad attitudes and behaviors in children are more likely to mediate, particularly with restrictive strategies. A second factor is the degree to which parents are involved in children's lives, especially in school or recreational activities or work around the house. In general, factors that limit parents' time with children (including their jobs or household work) also limit the time they can spend mediating children's interpretations of media content. A limited number of demographic factors also seem to distinguish parents who mediate more frequently and less frequently. Parents of young children, for example, mediate children's television viewing more than parents of older children. A greater number of educated parents have more often reported using instructive mediation. Differences in mediation of boys' and girls' media use, however, have not been consistent across these studies.

One interesting question that remains to be answered is how the use of media ratings systems and Internet filtering devices will fit into the mediation mix. The initial research on television ratings, conducted since 1999, seems to indicate that parents use the television ratings system as a rule to restrict viewing. To date, though, ratings systems have been used mostly by parents who already restrict content access, thus confirming already-established rules. Few parents who are low mediators have been encouraged to be so by media ratings labels. Adults' use of Internet filtering devices (such as filtering software or Internet browser settings) is not extensive enough as yet to show any sort of patterns. It could be that such devices mediate children's media use without any parent-child interaction. Alternatively, some parents may use these devices to initiate conversations when Web content is blocked from a child's view.

—Ron Warren

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Parenting Styles

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ADULT MEDIATION OF VIOLENCE EFFECTS

Adult mediation of violence effects refers to the behaviors that adults—usually parents or teachers—engage in to prevent children from experiencing harmful effects from exposure to media violence. Adults can mediate any form of violent media; however, the majority of the research has been done on mediation of violent television. Adult mediation can take several different forms. Each form of mediation has been met with varying effectiveness.

Research shows that the most successful form of adult mediation occurs when adults talk with children about violent television. This form of adult-child communication is often referred to as *active mediation*, although several other labels are commonly used as well. Active mediation can occur at any time; however, we know the most about active mediation that occurs while both the adult and the child are consuming violent media together.

Adults can make a variety of comments when using active mediation. For example, they might explain to a child that a violent program is not real or that the violent characters are not nice. Or adults might encourage the child to think about the negative consequences of violence or aggression. In addition, adults might talk to a child about the special effects that are used to create the violent scenes.

Active mediation of violent media has been linked with many positive outcomes among children. For example, children whose parents talk with them about television violence often are more critical viewers of

television than other children are. These children typically have more negative attitudes toward television violence, like violent characters less, and are less aggressive than children whose parents engage in less active mediation. It seems that consistent exposure to active mediation of television violence socializes children into a generally negative orientation toward violent material.

The effectiveness of active mediation can depend on the age of the child who receives the messages. For instance, making strong statements that communicate the parents' negative evaluation of the program and the characters (e.g., "I don't like how this character tries to solve problems") is particularly effective among young children (usually younger than about 9 years old). However, as children become older, they may resent hearing this kind of lecture and become less receptive to these messages. On the other hand, older children (usually older than age 9) benefit when adults ask questions that help them come to their own conclusions about the violent program (e.g., "Do you think that person would have many friends in the real world?"). As a result, messages should be tailored to the unique needs of the children who receive them.

The parents who are most likely to use active mediation are educated and believe that television can have a negative effect on their children. In addition, parents are more likely to use active mediation with younger children. Overall, however, few parents use active mediation. Some work suggests that parents do not believe that active mediation is an effective way to prevent their children from experiencing harmful media effects.

Another form of adult mediation is called *restrictive mediation*. Restrictive mediation refers to the rules and regulations that parents set for their children's viewing of media. Parents might have rules about how much television their children can view, how long they can view it, or what kinds of programs or channels are unacceptable. Parents can vary in terms of whether they have rules as well as how strictly they enforce their rules.

Restrictive mediation also is linked with some positive outcomes among children. Children whose parents restrict their television viewing are usually less aggressive than other youngsters. In addition, when these children do view television, they tend to be critical viewers.

However, some work suggests that restrictive mediation can backfire. That is, the children of parents who are very strict sometimes rebel against the rules. These children actively seek out the restricted content (e.g., at a friend's house) and are more aggressive than children whose parents have set more moderate rules. This tendency toward rebellion becomes particularly likely as children get older and reach adolescence.

Restrictive mediation is used with more frequency than active mediation is. Parents often feel that it is easier to set and enforce rules than to talk to their children about television. In addition, parents often believe that restrictive mediation will be more effective than active mediation. Restrictive mediation is most likely to be used with younger children.

A third form of adult mediation is called *coviewing*. Coviewing refers to parents viewing violent television with their children. Although parents sometimes talk to their children about television while coviewing, this term refers to the simple act of parents and children sharing television together without any formal discussion of the content.

Although coviewing can have positive effects when educational television is shared, its effects tend to be negative when violent television is coviewed. For example, when parents coview a violent television program with their children—and do not say anything to contradict what is shown—children interpret their parents' presence as an endorsement of the material. Children tend to pay more attention to the content that is coviewed, they become more involved in it, and they are more vulnerable to being affected by it. As a result, coviewing of violent television is often linked with increased aggression among children.

Coviewing is another commonly used form of adult mediation with both younger and older children. Coviewing of violent television often occurs when parents and children share viewing interests. In other words, parents often coview violent television because they like the programs. Not surprisingly, parents who coview usually have positive attitudes toward television.

—Amy I. Nathanson

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Adult Mediation Strategies; Fear Reactions; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Meta-Analyses of

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ADVERTISING, BODY IMAGE AND

Cumulative exposure to thin-ideal images in advertising and other forms of mass media is of greatest concern with regard to the development of positive or negative body image in women and men and boys and girls. The review of research in this area suggests a positive relationship between thin-ideal media exposure, thin-ideal advertising, and body image disturbance in young women and girls, particularly among whites. Body image disturbances are also increasing among boys, who have an increasing awareness of body image as a result of advertising featuring a muscular ideal.

THE THIN IDEAL IN ADVERTISING

Health communication and social science scholars suggest that the body shape standard for women as represented in mediated images has become increasingly smaller over the last several decades. We see these portrayals in entertainment programming on prime-time channels and cable, in music videos, in the editorial content of women's magazines, and in all forms of advertising. The Social Issues Research Centre reports that young women now see more images of what are considered to be outstandingly beautiful women in a single day than their mothers saw throughout their entire growing-up years. Some researchers argue that chronic dieting is a direct result of the social pressure on American women to be unnaturally thin, and they argue that this body shape ideal is a result of media exposure to images depicting and promoting images of thin women, especially in advertising.

Scholars studying the social effects of such media as advertising argue that, through repeated viewing of these images, women and girls are taught to judge and compare their own body shapes and sizes. Even though the advertising industry has received a good deal of criticism for its use of ultra-thin models, the industry seems to be reluctant to modify its practices because, in the end, images of thinner women sell.

EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO THIN-IDEAL IMAGES IN ADVERTISING

Because many researchers suggest that editorial content nowadays is so similar to advertising content, it has become even more difficult for readers and viewers to distinguish between the two. This is especially relevant for younger girls who read teen magazines and may not be very knowledgeable about the influences of advertising. Jean Kilbourne argues that advertising is a highly persuasive and pervasive medium that permeates society and sends subtle and repeated messages promoting the thin ideal. She further argues that it is the cumulative exposure to ads that is most harmful to women and girls. Other scholars suggest that advertising has been accused of unintentionally making women feel self-conscious and inadequate because advertising may play a role in reinforcing a preoccupation with physical attractiveness.

Several studies have examined predictive factors of body dissatisfaction, drive for thinness, anorexia, and bulimia—all correlates of body image disturbance—and have examined the relationship of media use and exposure as positive correlates to these dependent variables. These studies have been conducted via surveys and experiments with younger girls, teenage girls, college-aged women, and women older than college age, and most have been conducted to gauge the short-term psychological effects of exposure. Overall, experimental research finds that short-term exposure to thin-ideal images is a significant predictor of body dissatisfaction in college-aged women and high school girls. Yet the general conclusion from studies of this nature is that the key to better understanding the degree of effect on women and girls' body self-esteem and body image lies in a better understanding of media exposure patterns, especially long-term exposure to specific types of content.

Research on the social effects of mass media with respect to body image distortion in women and girls emphasizes that it is the internalization of the thin-ideal beauty standard that is a causal factor in negative body image and disordered eating in women and girls. It is also suggested that the internalization of this ideal comes from comparisons between oneself and target others as represented in the media via social comparison. Some studies have found that women and girls want to be thin because thinness is associated with beauty and attractiveness, whereas other studies have found women's desire to be thin to be associated with other positive characteristics, such as popularity, improved performance in school or on the job, and attractiveness to the opposite sex. Overall, research findings in mass communication and social and clinical psychology point to a causal link between exposure to thin-ideal media content and body image disturbance in populations of varying ages. For example, in a 1993 study that tested a sample of 8-to-14-year-old girls, Mary Martin and Patricia Kennedy found that girls who reported reading fashion magazines and who viewed models in advertisements and fashion layouts were more likely to feel badly about their own appearance than those who did not view similar content. In parallel studies with college-aged women, Kathy Wilcox and James D. Laird found that women who viewed images of slender models in magazine advertisements and compared themselves to the media models were more likely to report decreases in weight satisfaction and general body self-esteem.

The negative effect of mediated body image ideals is not exclusive to women and girls. Research from Anorexia Nervosa and Related Eating Disorders, Inc. (ANRED) suggests that the number of men and boys struggling with diagnosed eating disorders is on the rise. ANRED research reports indicate that approximately 10% of the male population in North America is affected by an eating disorder. More startling are the reports suggesting that men and young boys are engaging in excessive weight training in conjunction with the consumption of protein drinks that promise to provide the ideal muscular body type. According to a Harvard study on muscle dysmorphia, as many as 3 million males in the United States use anabolic steroids to increase muscle mass.

Chris Cobb argues that young and adult men have an increasing awareness of their body image because they are pummeled with hypermasculine images and images in lifestyle and fitness magazines that make them feel inadequate because they are not as muscular as the models in the ads. Cobb further reports that role models for young boys—male action figurines such as GI Joe—have increased in chest and bicep size over the last three decades. Consequently, young and adult men are motivated to engage in dangerous behavior to change their body shapes and sizes. Overall, research studying the relationship of media exposure to body dysmorphic disorder with men and boys suggests that exposure to ideal image advertisements is linked to changes in mood and in overall self-evaluations. In some cases, exposure is also linked to higher levels of depression and significantly higher levels of muscle dissatisfaction. For example, Harrison G. Pope, Jr., Roberto Olivardia, Amanda J. Gruber, and John J. Borowiecki report that men have increased their efforts to stay lean while still building muscle mass because of real-ideal discrepancies found in media content.

Communication scholars studying the potential effects of thin-ideal media exposure argue that the viewing of the thin beauty ideal or the muscular ideal in television commercials will likely result in a negative effect on body image of boys and girls because the viewing of the commercials will activate a self-schema that reminds the individual about the importance of appearance. An individual's concern with appearance, combined with a lack of understanding in the processing of visuals, makes for a harmful combination when young girls and boys are faced with unrealistic images of body shape and size. Visual communication scholar Paul Messaris argues that visual literacy is a prerequisite for the proper comprehension of visual media. According to Messaris, the allure and appeal of visual media make it very easy for a viewer to be duped by single or multiple images, such as images in advertising, if that viewer has little understanding of the ways visual media can misinform, distort, and manipulate. Jean Kilbourne further suggests that the processing of advertising images can be unconscious, and even though particular information might help viewers understand that the image being viewed is not real, the comparison between oneself and an idealized media model still seems to take place.

However, with the imagery in advertising becoming more tantalizing and sexy, and with an increased emphasis on beauty and thinness in media targeting adolescent girls and women, the problem is projected only to increase.

—Kimberly L. Bissell

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Body Image in Boys and Young Men; Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Eating Disorders; Food Advertising, Eating Disorders and

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ADVERTISING, DECEPTIVE PRACTICES IN

Deceptive advertising practices are those that are likely to mislead the consumer through false claims, misleading information, or inadequate disclosures. Although children have the potential to make and influence purchases, they lack developmental skills to fully comprehend and appreciate advertising practices. As a result, they may be misled by advertising practices that do not take into account their limited competencies. Research has examined the nature of various deceptive practices, and self-regulatory and public policies have been developed to redress these practices.

PUBLIC POLICY AND THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATION COMMISSION (FCC)

Acting in its role as trustee of the public interest, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has established public policy regarding children's advertising. These policies regulate advertising during children's programs in two areas: (1) limiting the amount of time allowed for advertising during children's programs, and (2) creating a *clear separation* between advertising content and programming content. This clear separation principle attempts to address the limited abilities of children to distinguish program from commercial content and encompasses three areas of potentially deceptive practice: separators or bumpers, host selling, and program-length commercials.

Separators or Bumpers

One component of the clear separation principle is the use of short video segments shown before and after commercial breaks to indicate a change between program content and commercial content. Known as *bumpers* in the industry, these short segments usually include such phrasing as "We'll be right back!" Research on the effectiveness of this practice is very limited. The two studies that have been done (in the late 1970s) indicate that the use of bumpers does not appear to be effective for children under the age of 7. Response time to recognize a commercial may be closer tied to children's ability to distinguish an ad from a program rather than to the bumper signaling a change.

Host Selling

A second component involves the potentially deceptive practice of using children's program characters to promote products either during the program or in commercial blocks adjacent to the program. Research indicates that, although this practice was

prevalent in the early 1950s, it declined over the next 10 years and was banned by the FCC in the 1970s.

Program-Length Commercials

Originally conceived as a program with the principal purpose of promoting products (particularly toys) to children, this content has changed to more closely resemble that of host selling. Research suggests that toy-based programming began in the 1980s with arrangements between toy companies and television producers to develop programming content that would promote toys and ancillary products, such as *Strawberry Shortcake* and *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe.* Since the passage of the Children's Television Act in 1990, the FCC has defined the program-length commercial as a commercial promoting a product that is also connected to the main program content. For example, showing a traditional commercial promoting Dora's playhouse during an episode of *Dora the Explorer* would be considered a violation of the new definition of a program-length commercial.

SELF-REGULATION AND THE CHILDREN'S ADVERTISING REVIEW UNIT (CARU)

In 1974, in response to concerns about children and advertising, the advertising industry created a self-regulatory program, the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), to monitor deceptive practices and provide guidelines for responsible advertising to children under the age of 12. These guidelines encourage advertisers to take into consideration the development of the child in order to provide appropriate information and avoid misleading the child. Among numerous suggestions, the guidelines offer procedures for providing disclaimers and disclosures and for use of premiums.

Disclaimers and Disclosures

Disclaimers reveal information about a product to avoid misleading the consumer. Those most common in children's advertising include such phrasing as "batteries not included" or "items sold separately." Research suggests that, although product disclaimers in children's advertising have become more prevalent since the 1950s, the language used since the early 1990s is adult directed. This is particularly relevant, as the few studies that have explored the effects of disclaimers with young children (8 years old and younger) indicate that children often do not understand the disclaimer and show greater comprehension of the intent of the disclaimer when simpler language is used. For example, research suggests that children are more likely to understand that a toy needs to be assembled before playing with it when the disclaimer uses simpler terms, such as "you must put this together" rather than "partial assembly required." These findings suggest that disclaimers need to address their audience's developmental level to be most effective with the target audience.

Premiums

Premiums are prizes that are often included with a target product to encourage the consumer to purchase it. For example, a cereal that offers a Star Wars spoon inside the box entices the consumer to purchase the cereal to obtain the prized spoon. Premiums have been used in a small portion of advertising aimed at children, but they are most likely to appear in ads for fast-food restaurants. A few studies have examined the impact of premiums on purchasing behavior. Research indicates that many mothers feel that premiums are overemphasized in commercials, yet observations of families in the supermarket indicate that very few children actually mention the prize as a reason to make a cereal purchase. One study suggests that children who did ask for a product because of the premium were more likely to get the product than those who did not ask for the premium. This is further supported by another study in which mothers indicate that requests for premiums are a strong motivation for them to purchase products for their children.

A combination of self-regulatory programs and public policies help guide advertisers from engaging in deceptive advertising practices. Yet little current research has been conducted regarding misleading strategies employed in contemporary society.

—Nancy Jennings

See also Advertising, Host Selling and; Advertising, Regulation of; Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Advertising and; Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

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ADVERTISING, EFFECTS ON ADOLESCENTS

Advertising is pervasive in our society, and the American Academy of Pediatrics estimates that the typical child in the United States sees almost 40,000 commercial messages each year. Young people are an attractive market for advertising. Not only do they have disposable income for personal purchases, but adolescence is the life stage during which brand preferences are formed. The manifest intent of advertising is to increase brand awareness and purchase, but advertisements can have unintended effects on adolescent health. This entry examines the possible impact of advertising on eating disorders, alcohol consumption, and smoking.

Adolescence is a period of change marked by tension between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents begin to experiment with adult roles as they become increasingly oriented toward relationships with their peer groups. These new roles are accompanied by uncertainty. Because media content is attractive and easily available, adolescents may turn to the mass media for information about these new roles. The pervasiveness of advertising, along with evidence that adolescents are more susceptible to its influence, gives rise to concern that it might become a source of information about adulthood that can lead to unhealthy behaviors.

BODY IMAGE AND EATING DISORDERS

Adolescence brings concerns about media's impact on eating disorders. The widespread incidence of anorexia (eating too little) and bulimia (inducing vomiting after overeating) has led scholars to examine media messages about body images. In American culture, physical attractiveness is linked to thinness. Analyses of *Playboy* centerfolds, female characters on television, women in magazine ads, and even Miss America contestants indicate that the ideal female form has become slimmer over the years. The increase in women's fitness magazines, the number of magazine articles about dieting and weight loss issues, and the number of advertisements for diet products illustrate further reinforcement of the thin ideal.

There are several explanations why advertisements and other media content are expected to influence adolescents' body image. Albert Bandura's social learning theory holds that attractive and rewarded characters are more likely to be modeled. So, adolescents are likely to try to look like the thin characters they see in the media. Leon Festinger's social comparison theory contends that people compare themselves to others they believe represent ideal or reasonable models. So, attraction to slim media characters and celebrities can be linked to body dissatisfaction, the drive for thinness, and symptoms of disordered eating.

Adolescent girls are believed to be especially susceptible to media influence on disordered eating. During puberty, estrogen causes adolescent girls to acquire more fat, especially in the breasts and hips. Adolescence is also a time when girls tend to view their bodies critically and begin to feel negatively about their physical appearance.

Researchers have found some connections between media use and disordered eating. Symptoms of eating disorders have been linked most consistently to thin female magazine models and fitness magazine reading. These effects are not direct, however—that is, scholars have not found that exposure to these models translates directly into eating disorders. Instead, exposure is linked to dissatisfaction with one's body, the drive to be thin, and various eating disorder symptomatology. Self-esteem appears to affect the relationship between exposure to thinness-promoting media content and development of eating disorders. Adolescent girls with lower self-esteem are more likely to be dissatisfied with their bodies and more likely to compare themselves with media images.

Most research on media and eating disorders has focused on female adolescents, but awareness is growing that media images can affect males. Unlike females, who want to be thinner, male adolescents want to be more muscular. There is evidence that the muscular male has become society's ideal; men's health and fitness magazines focus on models who are muscular and have low body weight and fat. Exposure to these images have been linked to male body dissatisfaction.

DRINKING

The American Pediatric Association points out that underage drinking is an important health risk for adolescents. Between 2000 and 2002, more than 17,000 adolescents died in alcohol-related automobile accidents. Alcohol increases the risk of adolescent suicide and homicide.

Alcoholic beverages are the most common type of drink on television and the most commonly advertised beverage on sports television. Scholars estimate that children will see more than a million acts of drinking on television by the time they are 18. Drinkers are portrayed as wealthy, successful, and attractive; advertisements associate alcohol with sex and romance, athletic ability, popularity, and camaraderie. Negative consequences of overconsumption are rarely seen.

The pervasiveness and glamour of these images of alcohol stimulate concerns about underage drinking and alcohol abuse. Bandura's social learning theory suggests that these ads are likely to serve as models for the audience. There is indirect evidence that alcohol advertising might be linked to underage drinking. Adolescents are more likely to drink the more heavily advertised brands. Watching college basketball and football (which are heavily sponsored by brewing companies) is associated with alcohol use in adolescents.

The strongest effects of alcohol advertising may be the fostering of positive attitudes toward alcohol and drinking. Budweiser's ad agencies have produced clever commercials that have created popular icons, such as the Budweiser frogs, annual events such as the "Bud Bowl," and catch phrases ("Whassup?"). The Clydesdale horses trot out holiday greetings each year. Ads such as these are rated among adolescents' favorites. Alcohol ads use techniques designed to attract adolescents' attention. Ads feature rock music, scantily dressed young women, and adolescent humor. Researchers observed that British adolescents became more aware of alcohol ads as they got older. Moreover, they reported that they liked the ads because they admired the lifestyles the ads depicted. Other researchers found that liking beer advertisements led to positive attitudes about beer and directly influenced beer consumption. Adolescents who enjoy advertisements are likely to drink earlier. Adolescents are likely to notice and like alcohol advertisements because they promote an attractive, adult lifestyle that adolescents find desirable and relevant to their needs to feel more adult. Thus, attention to alcohol advertising appears to stimulate a predisposition to drink.

SMOKING

It has been established that the use of tobacco contributes to the death of the user. An estimated 1,200 smokers die each day, and countless others try to quit the habit. Some believe that tobacco companies target adolescents to replace those lost customers. Scholars from the National Cancer Institute claim that tobacco companies intentionally market to youth in order to build new customers because they know that few people start smoking in adulthood. U.S. Department of Heath and Human Services statistics support the notion that smokers adopt the habit while they are young; 50% of smokers begin to smoke by age 13, and 90% begin by age 18. Between 1994 and 1998, the National Cancer Institute reported that 18% to 20% of all 12-to-20-year-olds smoked. Part of the explanation for adolescent smoking is misinformation about the nature of nicotine addiction. According to a 1994 surgeon general's report, young people believe that they can easily stop smoking, so they assume that the widely publicized health risks of smoking will not affect them.

Smoking is not typically seen on television. Tobacco ads were banned from broadcast media in 1971. Since then, smoking in television programs has also declined. Although most research on advertising effects on children focuses on television ads, smoking is one area where television has little influence. Television viewing declines, however, in adolescence. Young adults spend some of that time with magazines, which still carry tobacco ads. Magazines with large youth audiences have more tobacco advertising. In 2000, tobacco companies spent more than $100 million to advertise cigarettes in magazines that had significant youth readership. A study by Charles King and Michael Siegel found that, in 2000, tobacco ads in magazines reached 80% of all adolescents in the United States.

Academics, medical professionals, and public health officials are in general agreement that tobacco advertising has contributed to adolescent smoking. Some of the evidence is historical and correlational. Smoking among adolescent girls, for example, increased at the same time that advertising for women's brands increased. Adolescents' cigarette brand choices are concentrated in the most heavily advertised brands; brand choice and advertising seem to be more tightly connected for adolescents. Three years after the start of the Joe Camel advertising campaign that appealed to youth, Camel increased its share of the adolescent smoking market from .5% to 13%.

Although it is difficult to prove that tobacco advertising causes adolescents to smoke, scholars offer several explanations for its impact. Adolescents are particularly susceptible to peer pressure, and tobacco advertising suggests that smoking is common. Tobacco ads that depict smokers as physically active and energetic undercut awareness of the health risks associated with smoking. Tobacco advertisements use appeals that are attractive to the young. Smokers are presented as youthful, attractive, popular, and adventurous; tobacco is presented as smelling good and tasting good.

A longitudinal study of Massachusetts youth followed a group of adolescents from 1993 to 2000. Because the youth were followed over a period of years, the researchers were able to examine the forces that lead nonsmokers to become smokers. Smoking was affected by some social factors, such as having friends and adult family members who smoked. Smoking was also predicted by awareness of advertising slogans and brands. More interesting, however, is the connection between awareness of advertising and the belief that smoking had social value (e.g., increased attractiveness, maturity, popularity, and independence). The researchers concluded that tobacco advertising leads to adolescent smoking because it increases smoking's social value for adolescents.

CONCLUSION

In summary, it is important to remember that advertising is not the only source of potentially harmful effects for adolescents. Thin body ideals, alcohol use, smoking, and stereotypical images are commonly found in television programs, movies, and music videos and as themes in popular music. Even though there are few instances of smoking on television, characters rarely refuse to smoke or make disparaging comments about smoking or smokers. Smoking in the movies is more common than in real life. Even G-rated films commonly contain smoking and drinking; some animated children's films feature smoking. The mass media present many unhealthy messages to children and adolescents.

—Elizabeth Perse

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Advertising, Body Image and; Alcohol Advertising, Effects of; Cigarette Advertising, Effects of

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ADVERTISING, EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Children are inundated with marketing messages for toys, fast foods, cereals, snacks, electronics, and media content itself. Historically, concerns about advertising to children surround the issue of fairness. Is it fair to target children who are unable to distinguish commercial from noncommercial content or unable to recognize that the goal of the advertisement is to persuade them to buy a product? Moreover, there are concerns about the effects of marketing messages on children's attitudes (e.g., materialism), childhood obesity, and parent-child conflict. This entry examines the research evidence related to children's perceptions of advertisements and potential effects of these persuasive messages.

COGNITIVE ABILITIES NECESSARY TO PROCESS ADVERTISING

To respond to advertising in an adultlike manner or to defend against ads effectively, children must be able to distinguish programs (noncommercial content) from commercials and understand the persuasive intent of advertising. Research, conducted primarily with television, demonstrates that young children have difficulty doing both.

Children's Ability to Discriminate

Numerous studies have documented that children below age 5 have difficulty discriminating between television programs and commercials. When children do begin to discriminate, they often do so based on perceptual characteristics. For example, young children say that commercials are shorter than programs. They also frequently identify commercials as part of the program. In an experimental setting in which children were asked to retell the story of the program just viewed, Dale Kunkel found that most children wove the commercial scene into their sequence of story events even though they had been asked to tell only the story of the program.

Media policies and advertising practices have contributed to children's confusion and difficulty in discriminating between commercial and noncommercial content. In 1974, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created the *separation principle.* Separation devices (e.g., "We'll be right back after these messages") are segments roughly 5 seconds in length that are shown before and after commercial breaks. Rather than helping children understand the transition from program to commercial, research demonstrates that separators actually carry children's attention through the commercial to the next program segment because the separators include fun characters, music, and singing. Their form and style are very similar to those of the program itself.

Another advertising practice, *host selling*, makes discrimination difficult for children because the same characters used in commercials are featured in the adjacent program content (e.g., the Fruity Pebbles cereal ad is aired during a break in *The Flintstones* cartoon). Although host selling has been prohibited since 1974, evidence suggests that it is not effectively restricted. Kunkel's examination of the issue revealed that children aged 4 to 8 were less able to distinguish programs from commercials in host selling contexts.

Finally, the purpose of the *program-length commercial* is to expose children to a product line (e.g., GI Joe action figures) with the goal of increasing product sales and program popularity. The distinction between traditional, program-related product licensing and program-length commercials is based on which comes first, the program or the product. Historically, television programs were created to entertain or inform the viewing audience. Marketing of products then followed if the program was successful. In contrast, the program-length commercial was originally

conceived as a vehicle for promoting products to the child audience. Barbara Wilson and Audrey Weiss found that program-length commercials impaired discrimination judgments, and Patricia Greenfield and colleagues found they promoted imitation rather than imaginative play.

The Ability to Understand Persuasiveness

Children usually do not recognize the persuasive intent underlying advertising until around age 7 or 8. To process advertisements effectively, the viewer must recognize that the source of the advertisement has perspectives and interests other than those of the audience, that the source intends to persuade, and that biased messages demand interpretive strategies different from those required by unbiased messages. Young children, however, are very egocentric and lack these perspective-taking abilities; thus they are more vulnerable to misleading information.

Children often do not understand that claims may be exaggerated and that products are not as dazzling and exciting as they appear on television. The production techniques or formal features (e.g., audiovisual special effects, type of music, quick cuts) used in children's advertisements contribute to these perceptions. Special effects are largely holistic and designed to create moods, images, and impressions rather than to convey accurate information about products.

EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING MESSAGES

The intended effect, from an advertiser's perspective, is to generate requests for and consumption of products. Research indicates that advertisements are extremely successful at accomplishing this goal. Children remember products presented in advertisements, they develop loyalty and preferences for particular brands, and their desire for products is increased after exposure to advertising messages. Repeat exposures, premium offers, and favorite TV characters increase the likelihood that children will desire products and make purchase requests. Television viewing habits also seem to play an important role in advertising effects. Correlational data from multiple surveys indicate that heavy TV viewers want more advertised products and consume more advertised foods than light TV viewers. It is assumed that exposure to advertising messages produces these consumption behaviors, but it is likely that the reverse is also true. Children with an interest in particular products turn to television, magazines, the World Wide Web, and other sources to seek out information about products.

Although selling products is the desired outcome for advertisers, advertising messages have unintended consequences. Two are discussed here: eating habits and parent-child conflict. The issue currently in the forefront—from media coverage to policy efforts—surrounds the increase in childhood obesity. Analyses of television advertisements clearly indicate that approximately half of these ads are for unhealthy foods (sugared cereals, candy, snack foods, drinks, and fast foods.) As noted above, advertisements for food-related products do lead to increased desire for and consumption of these foods. However, Kunkel suggests that, to establish causal relationships between food marketing and health outcomes, more complicated models are needed that identify which variables contribute to an outcome like obesity. For instance, parents play an important role, as they are often the ones who purchase unhealthy foods at children's requests. This leads to a second indirect effect, parent-child conflict. Research conducted in the mid-to-late 1970s by Robertson, Atkin, and others found that parent-child conflicts transpired when parents refused to give in to children's requests. Children became disappointed, argued, and persisted in response to their parents' refusals. Such conflicts seem inevitable considering that advertising messages pervade our media landscape. New challenges, however, have emerged with digital marketing.

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

In the 1996 report *Web of Deception,* Kathryn Montgomery and Shelly Pasnik documented potentially harmful online marketing and data collection practices directed toward children. Specifically, the report focused on invasion of children's privacy (solicitation of personal information) and manipulation with unfair advertising practices (creating product spokescharacters who develop relationships with children). In October 1998, Congress recognized the need to regulate online marketing to children and passed the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which went into effect April 21, 2000. COPPA provides safeguards for children's privacy on the Internet by regulating the collection of personal

information from children under age 13. Despite this legislation, online advertisers continue to employ tactics that raise concern.

Montgomery describes three marketing strategies with problematic consequences: relational marketing, seamless integration of content and advertising, and branded environments. Relational or one-to-one marketing is defined as the development of unique, long-term relationships with individual customers to create personal sales appeals based on individual preferences and behaviors. Tempting online users with incentives, offering subscriptions to newsletters, or using cookies (small files created by a website server and stored on the user's computer) to enable companies to create profiles of individual users. Children are particularly vulnerable because they find offers of promotional material and free products in exchange for personal information very enticing. Content and advertising are seamless on the Web. There are no separation devices such as those as found in television, and the amount of time children spend exploring commercial websites is limited only by their own interest and parental regulation. Finally, the product itself (e.g., *Barbie, Hot Wheels*) is the content; hence, branded environments provide children with unfettered opportunities to interact with products and characters.

The literature surrounding children's perceptions of online advertising and potential effects is limited. As children navigate this seamless environment of entertainment and commercial content, what are their perceptions, and how might these online experiences influence consumer decisions? The research findings from television may or may not apply to online environments. One exploratory study, however, does provide food for thought. Lucy Henke explored children's perceptions of the persuasive intent of favorite websites. She asked children aged 9 to 11 years to complete questionnaires that assessed favorite after-school activities, followed by participation in a Web search session. Websites were bookmarked (i.e., *Toys R Us, Ben & Jerry's,* the Museum of Science, *Foster's Daily Democrat,* and *CNN*), and lists about other sites (e.g., *Batman Forever, ESPN,* and *MTV*) were provided to the children. When children were asked about their favorite sites, 74% named commercial websites as their favorites, but only 13% said that the purpose of their favorite site was to advertise. Interestingly, they thought the purpose of the site was for entertainment, which suggests that even children 9 to 11 years old may not be aware of the commercial intentions of many websites.

OTHER CONCERNS: MARKETING TO "UNDERAGE" YOUTH

In a report requested by President Clinton and Congress following the Columbine school shootings, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) found that the motion picture, music recording, and interactive game industries had engaged in widespread marketing of violent movies, music, and games to children that was inconsistent with the cautionary messages of their own parental advisories. For instance, nearly all the video game companies reviewed (via internal marketing plans) marketed violent, M-rated games to youth under the age of 17.

In a follow-up report in 2004, the FTC found problematic practices in the retail industry and in cross-industry marketing. The commission conducted an undercover shopper survey in which children and teens (under age 17) attempted to purchase music with explicit-content labels, R-rated DVDs, and M-rated interactive games at retail outlets, including Target, K-Mart, Toys-R-Us, and Circuit City; retail salespersons sold music, DVDs, and games to 83%, 81%, and 69% of the "underage" shoppers seeking to buy them, respectively. The commission also noted several examples of cross-marketing of entertainment media products with different ratings, labels, and intended audiences. An example of this is placing a movie trailer for *The Matrix* movie (rated R) within a video game (rated T). The intended audiences for these media products are different, but the marketing message is strategically placed to expose a younger audience to potentially inappropriate entertainment content. The ultimate question is whether or not these cross-media strategies have the effect of attracting a younger child or teenage audience to entertainment media intended for older audiences.

CONCLUSIONS

The research literature surrounding the effects of advertising on children provides important insights about our youngest consumers. Children and adolescents now have significant personal resources that allow them to make individual consumer choices as well as affect purchasing decisions within the family.

Yet, there remain unanswered questions about how advertisements—whether on television, on the Web, or in school—actually influence children's perceptions about products, purchasing decisions, health outcomes, and negotiations with parents, to name a few. Researchers who elaborate on past efforts and approach children's advertising in innovative ways will advance our understanding related to effects of these persuasive messages.

—Ronda M. Scantlin

See also Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Advertising, Host Selling and; Advertising, Persuasive Intent of; Advertising, Program-Length Commercials in; Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA)

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ADVERTISING, ETHNICITY/RACE IN

Research on the impact of ethnicity and race in youth's experience of advertising focuses on the exposure of different racial and ethnic groups to advertising, the amount and nature of representation of various racial groups in advertising, and the effect of that content on viewers from diverse backgrounds. The findings suggest that there are racially specific patterns of participation and racially specific content in advertisements. Moreover, there is evidence that the content has differential effects on the diverse members of the viewing audience. Advertising affects attitudes toward the ads, the products, and the individuals portrayed.

EXPOSURE TO ADVERTISING

Youth may be exposed to advertising on television, DVDs and videotapes, radio, the Internet, and in magazines. It is estimated that children under 14 are exposed to at least 40,000 ads yearly, with African and Hispanic American youth having higher levels of exposure compared to European American youth. The potential power of these advertisements is great, as advertisers estimate that children are directly responsible for $24 billion in purchases and indirectly influence about $188 billion in family purchases.

REPRESENTATION OF RACE AND ETHNICITY IN ADVERTISING

Diverse ethnic and racial groups have distinct patterns of inclusion in advertising. Research conducted since 2000 indicates that European Americans are overrepresented in commercials in adult programming and that African, Asian, and Hispanic Americans are underrepresented. More ethnic and racial diversity exists in ads associated with media directed toward children, in which approximately 57% of the advertisements portray participants of diverse groups. In a study of commercials associated with children's programs, European Americans represented 75% of the characters, African Americans represented 20% of the characters, and Latina/o and Asian Americans each accounted for 2% of the characters. Regardless of the media type, Native Americans are virtually invisible in advertising, with participation in the range of

5 or 6 characters out of 3,300 in a sample of commercials in children's programming.

THE NATURE OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC PORTRAYALS IN ADVERTISING

Advertising presents diverse racial and ethnic groups in distinct and limited ways. European Americans are presented as powerful, knowledgeable initiators of action and problem solvers. They are more likely to be spokespeople, providing important information about products. Authority and high status are typically portrayed by European Americans, often in white-only commercials. European Americans are likely to be the only models in important toy ads. European Americans are not stereotyped as a racial group in advertising—they are seen in all types of commercials for all types of products, and they are presented in all types of settings and can appear as adults, teenagers, or children.

The picture is very different for other racial and ethnic groups. Members of these groups have more limited roles, are associated with a restricted number of products, and appear in only a limited number of settings. Since 2000, commercials for financial services and restaurants in adult programming have presented African Americans as attractive and respected adults. But in ads directed to children, African Americans are still more likely to appear as laborers or servicepeople, as entertainers associated with music, or as athletes. They are less likely to have high-status roles, and they do not typically sell personal care products. However, because of the popularity of African American celebrities, there are a few examples of all-black advertisements.

Hispanics have a very mixed presence in advertising. In commercials directed to children, Hispanics are largely restricted to advertising for fast-food restaurants and are more likely to appear as children rather than as teens or adults. In commercials directed to adults, Hispanic roles emphasize physical and sexual attractiveness to the exclusion of other characteristics. Although it is true that advertisers trying to target Spanish-speaking audiences can advertise on Spanish-language cable television, where there are many examples of Hispanic-only ads, this option does not minimize the potential impact of Hispanic stereotypes on mainstream Anglo television.

Asian Americans in advertising for both adult and children are presented in settings associated with work, are shown as part of a group, are associated with the technology, and have a limited number of speaking roles. They are most likely to appear in work settings in roles that suggest passive personality characteristics. In terms of status, Asians are unlikely to fill adult roles and are more likely to appear as children or teens in advertisements.

Advertisements also portray the ways in which members of diverse groups interact with each other. Integrated advertisements are more common in children's programming than in adult programming. These advertisements almost always include European Americans, reaffirming the group's majority status in the society. Mixed-race groups are typically presented in public settings like schools, playgrounds, or streets, rather than in home or social settings. The interaction among the participants is cooperative, shown in such situations as play with action figures or games.

EFFECTS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY IN ADVERTISING

The effects of advertising featuring diverse racial and ethnic groups have not been well studied with children and adolescents. In general, advertising with diverse characters does not have a negative effect on product preferences and purchases. Viewers express preferences and buy products advertised by diverse role models. However, research on television content and racial attitudes among youth suggests that young people learn about racial and ethnic groups after exposure to diverse characters. Long-term exposure to these presentations can affect their racial attitudes and perceptions. There is also evidence that children and adolescents will observe and imitate same-race and different-race models. Although the research on advertisements featuring diverse characters is limited, it is reasonable to expect that commercial content specifically designed to influence attitudes and behavior toward products can alter children's and adolescents' attitudes toward and perceptions of the various racial and ethnic groups presented in advertising.

—Sherryl Browne Graves

See also Advertising: Effects on Children of; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity

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ADVERTISING, EXPOSURE TO

Children's and youth's exposure to advertising has increased in virtually all media realms over time. Estimates of their exposure to television advertising rose from 20,000 ads per year during the 1970s to more than 40,000 ads per year during the 1990s. Throughout this time, the proportion of products represented and the character demographics in television advertising have remained remarkably stable.

In the early 1970s, a seminal research project by Earle Barcus surveyed and described the nature of television advertising directed toward children. The majority of commercials were categorized into four groups: toys, cereal, candy, and fast food. In the early 1990s, another research team found similar proportions of the amount of product advertisements. Comparable trends were found with seasonal peaks of toy advertisements at the end of the calendar year and in the use of fun and happiness themes associated with the product.

Although gender representations in commercials have been more equitable in recent years than in the past, with the number of boys and girls shown in ads being fairly equal, there are concerns about patterns of roles to which each gender is assigned. Stereotypical portrayals in ads continue; boys tend to be shown acting aggressively, and girls are shown in domestic roles. Voiceovers in commercials directed toward boys tend to use male voices, whereas female voices are used for ads aimed at girls. Depending on how a commercial portrays a product (e.g., boys shown playing with a particular toy), children are influenced in both attitude (i.e., male viewers prefer that particular toy more than girls do) and behavior (i.e., male viewers tend to play with a toy advertised with a boy). A recent study of video game ads in video game magazines revealed that representations of boys outnumbered those of girls three to one, and that more than half of the ads touted violent games, with an average of 2.5 weapons per ad.

Even though neither tobacco nor alcohol can be used legally by children, youth are exposed to persuasive messages about these products. In 2001, youth aged 12 to 20 years saw approximately 245 televised alcohol advertisements. Companies may attempt to target children through the use of animated characters such as the Budweiser frogs in television ads and Joe Camel in print media. Brand recognition studies show that, among some tobacco products, brands may be universally recognized among young children. Similarly, brand recognition increases along with the amount of advertising. Studies have examined youth's exposure to ads for alcohol in magazines. As with television ads, increased exposure to alcohol ads in magazines, although not necessarily intended for youth, relates to youth's increased intentions to drink alcoholic beverages.

Print media, such as magazines, also exert a steady influence on older youth. Studies have documented that 46% to 57% of popular teen girls' magazines are devoted to advertisements. Themes of idealized beauty and sexual suggestion predominate. Advertisements tend to focus on physical appearance, with the overwhelming majority being for clothes, cosmetics, and weight loss programs.

Advertising exposure via newer media such as the Internet is less clear. However, food product marketers now promote Web addresses on product packaging and in television ads directing children to their websites. Once there, youth may engage with advergames—video games where youth interact with a product, such as Dunk N' Slam Oreos. Marketers of such products use advergames as a way to increase children's familiarity with and subsequent preference for particular brands.

Advertising also penetrates grade schools. Channel One is a daily newscast shown in approximately 12,000 middle, junior, and high schools. Advertising on Channel One has been shown to enhance youth's cognitions about advertised products, to produce more favorable affect toward products advertised, and to increase intentions to purchase the advertised products.

Sponsored sports equipment and vending machines selling sugared drinks and high-density, low-nutrient snacks may be placed on school property to generate revenue for schools and expose youth to product advertising. Additionally, advertising now crops up in school textbooks. Images of food products, such as M&M's, have been used to teach children how to count.

—Carmen Stitt

See also Commercial Television and Radio in Schools; Commercial Television in Schools: Channel One; Gender Roles in Magazines

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ADVERTISING, GENDER AND

For parents, teachers, and gender studies scholars, a primary concern about print advertising is its stereotypical representation of males and females. As a part of the broader category of media, advertising plays a role in the socialization of its viewers. Children and teens, attempting to figure out who they are, are more susceptible than adults to the socialization powers of the media. Advertising in both print and television media can influence the self-images of youth and adolescents and can shape their views of the appropriate social roles for males and females.

Although some studies were conducted before the 1970s, research in the area of advertising stereotypes and effects grew rapidly in the 1970s. In 1979, Goffman pointed out that, in print advertisements, women were usually portrayed in submissive roles, family roles, or lower-status positions than men were, and they were likely to be depicted as sex objects. In print ads of the 1970s, women were usually housewives in decorative roles. They were rarely shown as professionals or in activities away from the home, and they primarily advertised products for home use.

Studies conducted since the 1970s have found that not much has changed. Although Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) found changes in women's social and occupational roles, they also found an increase in portrayals of women in decorative and sexualized roles in ads in general interest magazines such as *People, Newsweek,* and the *New Yorker.* A study of *Vogue, Mademoiselle,* and *McCall's* from 1979 and 1991 produced similar results. More recent studies have compared advertising in different types of magazines. Linder (2004) found that ads in the fashion magazine *Vogue* depicted women more stereotypically than did the ads in *Time.* An analysis of ads in white women's magazines showed women in roles and with characteristics that suggested dependency and submissiveness, whereas ads in magazines targeting black women portrayed women as independent and dominant. White women were more objectified than black women. Mastin et al. (2004) looked at the products advertised in *The Ladies Home Journal* and *Essence* and found that most related to appearance, children, and home. The authors noted that women's magazines continue to subject women to traditional images of women's lives.

GENDER STEREOTYPES ON TELEVISION

Researchers who examined gender roles in television commercials in the 1970s found gender stereotypes to be quite prevalent. Men were the spokespeople for all types of products except cosmetics and household products, and voiceovers were male at least 90% of the time. Women in commercials typically were housewives, but men had a variety of occupations. Courtney and Whipple's 1974 examination of four studies found that women were overrepresented in family and home settings and were most often seen performing domestic tasks. Men dominated advertising dealing with entertainment, business, sales, and management occupations, and they usually did not demonstrate products—rather, they were often shown benefiting from tasks performed by women.

More recent studies found both similarities and differences when comparing advertising in the 1970s with advertising in the decades since then. Women were still more likely to be the representatives for domestic products, and men were more likely to represent nondomestic products. Males performed 70% of voiceovers, compared with 90% in 1978. Pierracine and Schell (1995) also found a 70% decrease in male voiceovers as well as more atypical than stereotypical roles for women. Stereotypical roles included

homemaker, secretary, and nurse, as well as situations in which women were viewed as victims, nags, or scatterbrains, or in subordinate positions.

Rouner, Slater, and Domenech-Rodriguez (2003) examined the content of beer commercials and nonbeer commercials and found that a majority of the beer commercials contained traditional gender roles and sexist content. Nonbeer ads were evenly divided between sexist and nonsexist content.

GENDER ROLES IN CHILDREN'S ADVERTISING

Two studies looked at gender and advertising spokescharacters—the animated characters used as product representatives, such as Tony the Tiger and the Energizer Bunny. Spokescharacters are prevalent in advertising directed toward children. A 1999 study by Peirce and McBride found that most spokescharacters were male: 30 of 39 were male, 2 were both male and female, 2 were female (Mrs. Butterworth and Aunt Jemima), and 5 were judged neither male nor female. The neutral characters were Scrubbing Bubbles, Snuggles Bear, Cheerios Bee, 7-Up Dots, and Toilet Duck. In the second study (Peirce, 2001), participant ratings in an experimental setting indicated that male spokescharacters were not necessarily preferred by viewers. The spokescharacter was better liked when the gender of the spokescharacter matched the gender of the perceived target audience.

Maher and Childs (2003) undertook a longitudinal analysis of gender roles in children's television advertisements and found that gender stereotyping, although not quite as prevalent as previous decades, is still present in the 21st century. They determined that there is more gender equality in the ads targeting one sex or the other but that males still outnumber females as the dominant product users, voiceovers, and main characters.

EFFECTS OF ADVERTISEMENTS

If images in the media had no effect on audiences, these studies of representations in advertisements would be trivial. But research suggests that gender stereotyping does matter. Kilbourne, who has studied gender stereotypes in ads for 30 years, describes their impact on adolescent girls who lose self-confidence and self-esteem. Advertising, she says, contributes to these losses through its emphasis on physical beauty and thinness in females. The results among teens and preteens may include obsession with their looks and dangerous dieting practices undertaken in attempts to reach the female ideal. Citing expectation theory, Maher and Childs (2003) suggest that gender stereotyping in children's television advertising will be instrumental in shaping children's expectations of gender roles in a social context.

—Kate Peirce

See also Body Image in Boys and Young Men; Eating Disorders; Food Advertising, Eating Disorders and

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ADVERTISING, HEALTH AND

Children and adolescents are a major market force because of their spending power, purchasing influence, and value as future adult consumers. Given the high economic stakes, the number of commercial messages targeting youth is exploding. Multiple marketing techniques and channels are used to reach youth, including mass media advertising (e.g., television, magazines), online advertising, in-school marketing, product placements (in TV, movies, videogames, etc.), licensing of popular characters in movies and TV, and other promotions such as cross-selling and tie-ins. Messages are intended to build brand loyalty and promote product use, but they may also be selling unhealthy lifestyles and habits and contributing to a public health crisis. By influencing both intended and unintended health outcomes of America's youth, these messages play a key role in socializing children and adolescents as consumers, influencing their health decisions regarding eating behaviors, nutrition and obesity, and the use and abuse of tobacco and alcohol. A significant amount of research evidence has accumulated on the nature and prevalence of health-related advertising messages, the consequences of exposure to such messages in different age groups, and the implications for policy decision making.

THE NATURE AND PREVALENCE OF ADVERTISING MESSAGES

The vast majority of research on advertising to youth focuses on television advertising. It is estimated that the typical child sees nearly 40,000 television commercials a year, and upfront advertising spending in 2004 on children's network television alone was estimated to be more than $900 million. Although youth spend more time watching television than using other media, the paucity of research examining other media channels leaves a large gap in our knowledge of the role of advertising on young people's healthy and unhealthy lifestyles.

Television advertising influences children and adolescents in two ways. First, advertisers target children and adolescents directly as the *primary target audience* for products that are relevant to their demographic, such as food, toys, and entertainment (movies, music, etc.). These messages influence young people's purchase and consumption of products as well as the "purchase influence attempts" they make to parents. Second, children and adolescents are exposed to advertising indirectly as a *secondary audience* for products and services targeted to adults, such as alcohol, tobacco, and most medicines and drugs. Although much of this advertising is adult oriented and therefore less likely to appeal to or be attended to closely by youth, exposure to these messages may have long-term effects, so substantial research has examined the effects of young people's exposure to some advertising targeted to adults.

Changes in a child's or adolescent's consumer behavior may be due to cumulative exposure to ads with age, to learning from significant others, or to maturation and experience. Research on advertising to children grows from an understanding of key issues related to cognitive development, including how children understand advertising and how they are influenced by it, starting at the most fundamental level of information-processing tasks but also including the socialization process of youth. Critical factors include children's ability to discriminate between the program and the commercial, which involves recognition of the persuasive intent of the ad message, and advertising effects such as recall of ads, attitudes toward commercials, brand preferences, and desire for the advertised merchandise. Research also examines the role of production conventions (such as music) and different advertising strategies (such as the use of spokescharacters or celebrities) to enhance the effectiveness of advertising appeals to children.

For adolescents, development of the cognitive skills needed to process and fully understand information presented in commercials is not so much an issue. However, as the influence of parents diminishes, advertising may enhance consumer socialization, inducing youngsters to engage in adult behaviors such as smoking and drinking. Research suggests that television advertising does influence health-related knowledge and behavior of youth in negative ways.

However, because of variations in the methodologies and measures used, caution must be exercised in comparing the findings of studies.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AS THE PRIMARY TARGET AUDIENCE

Children long have been seen as vulnerable to advertisers, and for a quarter-century televised food advertising targeted to children has been of critical interest to parents, researchers, and policy makers. According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, fast-food and snack-food companies spend $10 to $12 billion a year in marketing to children and teens. Studies of advertising content of children's programming find that cereal, candy, and fast-food restaurants are three of the four categories constituting more than 80% of the ads. The majority of these commercials over the past 25 years have consistently promoted highly packaged and processed foods of low nutritional value.

The growing epidemic of overweight children has brought renewed attention to the possible role that food and beverage marketing activities may play in influencing eating behaviors of youth. According to Katherine Battle Horgen and her colleagues, studies reveal that children show more favorable attitudes toward, preferences for, and behaviors toward food products they see advertised. In addition, heavier viewing of television has been associated with less-healthy food choices, according to a review of 40 studies by the Kaiser Family Foundation. The report notes that the number of commercials for candy, snacks, and sugared cereals is far greater than the number of commercials for the healthier, more nutritious foods recommended by the USDA Dietary Guidelines. The general finding that eating habits formed during childhood often persist throughout life underscores the serious implications of such advertising.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AS THE SECONDARY TARGET AUDIENCE

Dale Kunkel has reviewed the substantial body of research assessing the influence of commercials for sensitive products not intended for children, including alcoholic beverages and certain drugs and medicines. Although tobacco products are no longer advertised on television, there is a large body of research examining the influence of marketing and advertising in other media (e.g., out-of-home billboards, magazines) on children's and adolescents' attitudes toward, intentions to use, and actual use of these products.

Drugs and Medicines

With the pervasiveness of advertising for nonprescription (over-the-counter, or OTC) and prescription (direct-to-consumer, or DTC) drugs, it is inevitable that children and adolescents are indirectly exposed to these ads. In 2003, ad spending for drugs and medicines increased to slightly more than $12 billion. While drug advertising may provide consumers with information about the treatment of health problems, it may also encourage individuals to buy and use medications they may not need; furthermore, it may socialize young people to have casual attitudes toward drug use and to believe that physical and emotional discomfort can be ameliorated by "popping a pill." Although OTC drugs are claimed to be safe if used correctly, the notion of "correct use" (e.g., proper dosage, choosing the right medicine, etc.) is an area of concern for the youth audience, particularly because these products are readily available to young people. Indeed, some critics have argued that OTC ads may contribute to children overdosing on these drugs.

Three general areas have been investigated in previous research on drug advertising: the impact of advertising on brand choice and requests; the socialization of young people to view medicines as a palliatives; and the role of advertising as an "environmental influence" on illicit drug use (e.g., marijuana). In his review of research on children and television advertising, Dale Kunkel notes that, although some modest short-term effects on brand choice have been demonstrated, studies do not indicate any long-term impact on children's beliefs or attitudes about medicine use or on their requests to parents for medicine to cure their ills.

There is some support for the idea that advertisements shape children's views on the amount of societal sickness and reliance on medicines for the relief of ailments. These perceptions by youth may not be surprising, however, given that the content of OTC drug ads tends to focus more on what the drug will do for the consumer (i.e., consumer awareness of product as primary goal), rather than on the reasons why the drug should be ingested (i.e., an education about product attributes).

In their review, Anna B. Almarsdottir and Patricia J. Bush (1992) found several studies examining the role of OTC drug advertising in influencing illicit

drug use attitudes and behaviors among young people. However, they concluded that there was no substantive support for a causal link between exposure to OTC ads and drug abuse or other negative effects. Updated research focusing on the effects of OTC drug ads on children and adolescents is sorely needed.

Children and adolescents are also likely to be exposed to DTC advertisements, as expenditures for this type of pharmaceutical advertising have soared since 1997 from $900 million to $4.1 billion in 2004, with television advertising witnessing the most rapid growth. But there is a dearth of research on the influence of DTC advertising on young people. Although research on adults shows an increase in awareness of drug brands and an impact on their decisions about medications and communication with their doctors, whether similar outcomes might result for young people exposed to DTC advertising is a matter of speculation.

Tobacco and Alcohol

Underage viewers are also unintentionally exposed to advertisements for tobacco and alcoholic products. Susan Villani reports on numerous recent studies documenting that children and adolescents who are exposed to greater amounts of tobacco or alcohol advertising are more likely either to use or to intend to use such products. The evidence for this relationship between advertising and promotions and product consumption or intention to consume is strongest in the case of cigarettes. For alcohol, correlations have been only moderate. Research shows the influence of advertising on young children's recognition of brand logos, including logos for cigarette brands. Studies of older children that examine the relationship of various advertising and marketing techniques for cigarettes and alcohol to later susceptibility to smoking and drinking note that advertising for these products is associated both with beliefs about product use and with behavior. Researchers have also expressed concern about the frequent use in alcohol advertising of positive values linked with drinking, such as romance, sociability, and relaxation.

Countercampaigns

Critics often suggest a ban on advertising of products deemed to be unhealthy. However, some believe that counterads can be more effective, by educating young people about the negative effects of these products and dissuading them from unhealthy behaviors. At present, though, counteradvertising does not seem able to reach the density that mainstream advertising already has, thus making it less useful as a solution to counteract messages for alcohol, tobacco, food, and the like.

Over the past 50 years, health campaigning has increased steadily. However, according to a report by Charles Atkin, findings are mixed on the effects of public service announcements (PSAs) to increase awareness, reinforce positive beliefs, intensify personal concern, and facilitate behavior change. When used as part of a media campaign in tandem with multiple media channels and interpersonal interventions, PSAs can be moderately successful under certain conditions. With greater availability of funds, paid messages about illicit drugs, smoking, and alcohol are more frequent, although access to free media placements have diminished significantly.

Anti-smoking campaigns have shown some promise in decreasing teen smoking. In 2002, more than 21 states used paid anti-smoking advertising targeted to youths, funded primarily from the 1997 settlement between tobacco firms and the U.S. attorneys general. Although it is unclear whether recent declines in smoking among youth are due to these campaigns or to macro trends in tobacco use, a fundamental question is whether using any anti-smoking message makes sense from a public health perspective, compared to doing nothing at all. Drunk driving has decreased substantially over the past two decades, yet the only notable evidence of media effects in this area comes from programs that used media messages in conjunction with rigorous enforcement initiatives. Meanwhile, some groups continue to recommend stricter limitations on the amount of advertising on children's television, a ban on all tobacco and alcohol advertising in all media, and the use of PSAs targeted to adolescents as well as more involvement by parents in educating youth to be responsible and informed consumers.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Although issues of methodology may obscure research findings on the influence of advertising on child and adolescent health, the pattern of previous outcomes indicates that advertising reaching young audiences effectively influences their unhealthy attitudes toward and use of certain products. The challenges are many for future research, which should examine areas such as OTC and DTC drug advertising; control for other influences, such

as marketing activities other than advertising in media other than television (e.g., the Internet); examine differences in short-term versus long-term effects of advertising; better separate out social effects, such as the influence of peers and family; address whether and how television may contribute to positive consumer behavior patterns; and examine how critical television viewing skills might ameliorate negative effects. An open dialog between public health educators and advertisers is needed to determine whether and how it might be possible to work in tandem to achieve important health goals for youth such as those promoted by Healthy People 2010, the national health goals stated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

—Patricia A. Stout

See also Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Food Advertising, Eating Disorders and; Food Advertising, Obesity and; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

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ADVERTISING, HOST SELLING AND

Host selling refers to a form of advertising that uses program talent, including animated cartoon characters and "live" program hosts, to deliver commercials. Such character endorsement may confuse children and keep them from distinguishing between program and nonprogram material. An example is an advertisement for *Bananas in Pajamas* toy characters airing during the children's program of the same name.

Host selling has been an area of concern for children's advocates for decades, largely due to children's nature as a special audience. Research suggests that children do not have the cognitive ability to differentiate between programs and ads until the age of 4 or 5, and do not recognize the persuasive attempt inherent in advertising until the age of 7 or 8. As a result, many feel that advertising to children can be unfair and have sought to regulate it.

In 1974, Action for Children's Television (ACT) petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to require broadcast licensees to air an hour of educational programming for children each day, and to ban licensees from airing ads directed at preschoolers. In response to the petition and other pressure, the FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) and two Notices of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), eventually resulting in the Children's TV Policy Statement. Among other guidelines, the statement discouraged host selling and restricted program-length commercials (PLCs), a similar form of advertising in which commercials for a product are aired during a program associated with a product (e.g., a commercial announcement for a Sonic hand-held game broadcast during the *Sonic the Hedgehog* program). The statement was not a rule, and therefore violations of it did not result in fines. Rather, it was a license renewal processing guideline, suggesting that licensees who wanted the greatest likelihood of having their licenses renewed should adhere to it.

Due to its lack of enforcement powers, advocates of advertising restrictions were not entirely satisfied and continued to press the issue. As a result, Congress took the unusual step of funding an FCC Task Force in 1978 to examine children's television. In 1980, the FCC issued another NPRM to consider making the guidelines into administrative laws, or rules. However, the election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980 ushered in an era of deregulation and the relaxation, rather than codification, of the advertising guidelines.

Critics of advertising to children persevered, and in 1990 Congress passed the Children's Television Act of 1990. In addition to other provisions, the act's rules prohibit both PLCs and host selling, and they

apply to both commercial and noncommercial television broadcast stations (a noncommercial television station is impacted by the host selling policy if it airs a sponsorship announcement featuring the same characters that appear in the immediately adjacent children's program). The commercial limitations went into effect on January 1, 1992.

In 2004, the FCC revisited children's programming obligations to update them for the digital world. In addition to upholding the existing host selling and PLC rules, the new rules also ban host selling Web links or Web addresses that are promoted in a show and that use characters from that show to sell a product. These newer rules, which went into effect on January 1, 2006, are currently at the center of a legal battle in which Viacom, the parent company of children's television network Nickelodeon, is suing in federal court in Washington, D.C., asking that the rules be thrown out or remanded on the basis that they are unconstitutional and that they pose an economic hardship on stations that would be forced to redesign existing programming and websites. At the same time, the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ, led by former FCC commissioner Gloria Tristani, filed suit in federal court in Cincinnati asking for a strengthening of the rules. With both activists and the TV industry threatening lawsuits, a compromise agreement was reached in December 2005 that eased some restrictions but maintained others. This was contingent on FCC agreement to the compromise. However, in March 2006, the FCC issued a second Notice of Proposed Rule Making about the matter and is currently collecting public comment on how the issue should be handled.

—Lara Zwarun

See also Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Advertising, Regulation of; Advertising on Children's Programs; Children's Television Act of 1990; Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Advertising and

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ADVERTISING, INTENDED VS. UNINTENDED EFFECTS OF

The effects of television advertising on children and adolescents can be divided into two general types: intended and unintended. Intended effects are the effects that advertisers wish to achieve with their advertisements, and unintended effects include the often-undesired side effects of advertising exposure.

INTENDED EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING

Intended effects research typically focuses on three kinds of effects of advertising on children: (1) cognitive effects, including children's awareness of brands; (2) affective effects, such as children's product preferences; and (3) behavioral effects, including children's purchase requests.

Cognitive Effects

Cognitive effects research focuses on children's recognition or recall of commercials and brands, which are often qualified as children's *brand awareness.* Both brand recognition and recall are usually operationalized by showing children a series of brand logos, brand characters, or commercials. In the case of brand recall, children are asked to name the specific brand when cued by the stimulus. In the case of brand recognition, they are invited to choose from a number of available options. It has been found that children's ability to recognize brands starts earlier in development than their ability to recall these brands.

Several studies have investigated the effects of advertising on children's brand recognition and recall. The studies on children's brand recognition have consistently found a relation between advertising and brand recognition. However, the relation between advertising and brand recall has been established only among older children and adolescents, not among younger children. A possible explanation for this developmental difference is that most recall tasks, particularly those in which children have to come up with the brand names themselves, are too difficult for younger children and are perhaps so difficult that advertising has no or little effect on their brand recall.

Affective Effects

Affective effects studies concentrate on children's attitudes toward and preferences for commercials and brands. Even very young children have distinct ideas about what they do and do not like. Studies examining the relation between advertising and brand preferences have shown that exposure to advertising can affect children's brand attitudes, although this does not necessarily occur. Children's attitudes toward brands are determined by many factors, including their gender, cognitive level, media preferences, and susceptibility to peer influence. It has been shown that that the most crucial predictor of children's brand attitudes is whether they like the commercial.

Behavioral Effects

A third type of intended effects research investigates the extent to which children are persuaded by advertisements. Because young children generally do not have the means to purchase products, behavioral advertising effects are usually measured by means of children's product requests to parents or their Christmas wishes. Studies of the effects of advertising on children's request behavior have consistently demonstrated that children who watch commercial television ask their parents for advertised products more often. In addition, children's advertising exposure highly predicts the number of requests for advertised products on their Christmas wish lists.

UNINTENDED EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING

Unintended advertising effects encompass the often-undesired side effects of advertising. Unintended effects studies have investigated, for example, whether advertising stimulates materialism, parent-child conflict, unhappiness, and bad eating habits.

Materialistic Values

Several authors suggest that advertising stimulates materialistic values in children. According to these authors, advertising enhances materialism because it is designed to arouse desires for products that would not otherwise be salient. Advertising propagates the ideology that possessions are important and that desirable qualities—such as beauty, success, and happiness—can be obtained only by acquiring material possessions. Several studies have established the relation between exposure to advertising and materialistic values in children as well as adolescents.

Parent-Child Conflict

It is often assumed that advertising contributes to conflicts between parents and children. The underlying idea here is that advertising encourages children to ask for the advertised product. Because parents do not want to comply with all these product requests, they have to say no to their children more often. As a result, the chance of conflicts between the parent and child increases. Studies on advertising-induced conflict have consistently found positive relations between advertising exposure and purchase requests and between purchase requests and parent-child conflict.

Dissatisfaction and Unhappiness

Some researchers believe that advertising can make children unhappy. First, it is assumed that advertising paints a world full of beautiful people and desirable products. If children watch too many commercials and compare them to their own situations, the contrast between the two worlds can make them unhappy. Although there is some evidence that exposure to beautiful models in magazines can negatively affect the self-perception of teenage girls and boys, the relation between exposure to advertising and unhappiness has never been established among younger children.

A second way in which advertising may affect children's happiness involves the manner in which children's products are presented in commercials. By using camera and editing techniques that are not well understood by young children (e.g., close-ups, moving images of toys that do not themselves move), commercials can create high expectations about the actual performance and quality of the product. If the product is a disappointment after purchase, children can become frustrated and unhappy. However, although one study has found a small relation between exposure to advertising and children's dissatisfaction with products, the research is too scarce for decisive conclusions to be drawn about this unintended effect.

Advertising Enhances Bad Eating Habits

Finally, it is often assumed that advertising creates wants for advertised food products that may endanger children's health. A large share of child-directed advertisements promote high-calorie products, including candy, soft drinks, and fast-food restaurants. Consequently, advertising is often considered one of the causes of the dramatic increase in obesity among children over the past decades. Several authors have argued that exposure to advertising increases the consumption of unhealthy products, which in turn leads to obesity among children and adolescents. In line with this assumption, several studies have found weak to moderate relations between children's advertising exposure and their diets, overweight, and obesity.

—Moniek Buijzen and Patti M. Valkenburg

See also Advertising, Health and; Advertising, Materialism and; Advertising, Parent-Child Conflict and; Advertising, Viewer Age and; Purchase Influence Attempts

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ADVERTISING, MARKET SIZE AND

In 2003, the American Psychological Association (APA) estimated that marketers spend more than $12 billion a year on television commercials aimed at children and adolescents and that the typical child, regardless of age, views more than 40,000 commercials each year. This occurs despite Federal Communications Commission (FCC) limits of 10.5 minutes of advertising per hour on television during weekends and 12 minutes on weekdays in programming aimed at children. Even those limits are occasionally violated, as indicated by the $1 million fine the FCC levied against Nickelodeon Channel owner Viacom and the $500,000 fine against ABC Family Channel owner Disney for violating the FCC children's commercial restrictions.

Another indicator of the size of the market is the $10 billion that U.S. Senator Harkin (D-Iowa) claimed in 2005 is spent by the food industry each year on advertising targeted at children. In a 2005 announcement that it was voluntarily halting all television advertising of foods it considered unhealthy for children under 12, Kraft Foods, one of the largest advertisers in the country, noted that it spent about $90 million annually on such advertising. The company has a policy of not advertising to children under 6 years of age.

Advertisers are interested in reaching children and adolescents because they are a large and growing market. For example, American adolescents are estimated to spend some $140 billion a year, and children 12 and younger are said to spend $25 billion. The latter are believed to exert influence over parents in an additional $200 billion in spending. A 2005 study by Simmons Market Research found that teenagers spend an average of $458 million a week. A report in *Business 2.0* magazine estimated the amount teenagers spend as much higher at $94.7 billion for goods and services.

Commercials have become so pervasive on television that one major cable company launched a 24-hour digital cable channel for preschoolers in 2005. It includes commercials before and after programs, most of which were originally broadcast on PBS, such as *Sesame Street* and *Barney and Friends.* The prevalence of such advertising led the American Psychological Association to issue a 2005 report recommending that the federal government restrict marketing aimed at anyone 8 or younger. A 2005 study by University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign researchers found an average of 10.65 food advertisements in a sample of TV ads, leading the authors to conclude that 6-to-11-year-olds view about 11,000 such ads each year, more than one third of which are for fast food and convenience foods. Many nutritionists attribute the growing problem with overweight students to the increased consumption of convenience foods and fast foods.

—Roy L. Moore

See also Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Advertising, Effects on Children

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ADVERTISING, MATERIALISM AND

Whether advertising increases materialism, particularly in children, is a question that has been asked frequently over the years but especially since the inception of mass media advertising. However, concern has increased primarily since the advent of television advertising, which gave marketers much greater access to children's attention and comprehension. The concern appears to have taken on even more urgency in recent years as the number of dollars spent on marketing to children has skyrocketed. Children are a lucrative segment for marketers, not only because they have their own money to spend but also because they are also becoming increasingly influential in the purchase decisions of their parents.

Yet, despite the seemingly obvious anecdotal evidence that parents, teachers, and even health-care professionals provide that suggests clear increases over time in children's desire and requests for more "stuff," good empirical evidence that attests to the relation between advertising and materialism for children is remarkably scarce. This scarcity can be attributed to a number of issues, but two in particular are noteworthy: the difficulty in understanding precisely what is meant by *materialism* (and thus measuring it) and the difficulty of doing research on children.

With respect to defining and measuring materialism, is materialism (and its relation to advertising) reflected by an increase in product requests by children after they have been exposed to increasing levels of advertising? Is it reflected in more positive attitudes and greater desire for products after greater exposure to advertising? If it is, then the answer is easy: Advertising clearly leads to these outcomes, and this assertion has been documented in a number of well-controlled studies. However, materialism is typically conceptualized as involving something deeper than short-term desires and attitude change. Specifically, materialism is generally thought to be reflected in more deeply seated traits such as envy, jealousy, or lack of generosity, or in value system compositions in which the attainment of material goods and wealth is central to the individual and is seen as a prerequisite to success and happiness.

The second problem, the difficulty of conducting research with children, is equally important. Aside from the ethical issue of whether exposing children to massive (or even small) doses of advertising is worth the knowledge to be gained from experimentally assessing outcomes, there are daunting problems of measuring materialism in children. One such problem is that deeply rooted beliefs, such as those embodying personal values, may not yet have formed in the early stages of childhood. Another concern is that, even if values and value systems have been sufficiently formed, children may not yet have the ability to fully articulate them. Consequently, researchers are often left with more short-term, "early indicators" of developing materialism such as those identified earlier (e.g., attitude change, desire, preference, frequency of product requests).

Nevertheless, despite these problems, good research does exist that can speak either directly or indirectly to the issue of whether advertising influences materialism in children. Some of this research pertains to how children comprehend advertising and whether they are able to combat its effects. Other research pertains directly to the link between advertising and materialism.

CHILDREN'S COMPREHENSION OF ADVERTISING

Some researchers have examined whether children have the ability to comprehend advertising and its

intent. This topic has played a part in one of the primary arguments for regulating, if not banning, advertising to children, for one could argue that children's inability to understand advertising can have damaging effects. This issue is generally viewed as involving two questions: first, whether children can distinguish commercials from programs (in the case of television), and, second, whether they understand what advertising is trying to do, even if they can distinguish it from other programming. The first question is a function of how children develop cognitive skills as they age. Drawing on Jean Piaget's framework of cognitive development, Deborah Roedder John (1999) characterized children's cognitive development as moving through three stages of information processing ability: cued processors (under 7 years), limited processors (ages 7–11), and strategic processors (age 12 and older). Cued processors tend to distinguish objects on the basis of perceptual cues such as size, whereas limited processors and strategic processors are able to use a number of dimensions to reason about a stimulus in a thoughtful and abstract manner. Limited processors differ from strategic processors in that they are not generally as skillful in accessing and using prior knowledge to think about the implications of a stimulus such as advertising.

This general framework fits very nicely with the research to date on children's comprehension of advertising. For example, some research shows that children can actually distinguish ads from television programs at a very early age. One study found that preschool children could distinguish the program *Captain Kangaroo* from ads within the program (70% for 4-year-olds; 90% for 5-year-olds). However, this discrimination appears to have more to do with the structural differences between ads and programs ("Ads are shorter," children will report) and less with comprehension of what advertising means. In that same study (as well as many others), those same children were unable to explain the difference between the ads and the programs. As children enter the limited processing stage (around age 8), they begin to develop a fairly clear sense of the persuasive intent of messages, but unfortunately they are not always adept at using this knowledge as a defense against persuasive ads. Controlled experiments have shown that, even when children are clearly made aware of advertising's persuasive intent, such awareness had little to no effect on evaluations of the advertised products by first and second graders nor fifth and sixth graders.

ADVERTISING AS A CAUSE OF MATERIALISM

The question is, does exposure to advertising (because of or in spite of children's inability to distinguish or combat its purpose) result in increased levels of materialism? There is some evidence that it does. In a field experiment, research by Bradley Greenberg and colleagues (1993) showed not only that high school students exposed to advertising via Channel One programming were likely to evaluate the advertised products more highly than those not in the Channel One program, but also that students exposed to Channel One exhibited more materialistic attitudes than students who were not exposed (e.g., they more highly endorsed the notion that money leads to happiness). In another study of 9-to-14-year-olds, Marvin Goldberg and his colleagues (2003) found that materialism was positively correlated with frequency of viewing commercials, interest in commercials, and favorable response to celebrity endorsers. In yet another study, this one on adults, L. J. Shrum and his colleagues (2005) found that level of television viewing in general was positively correlated with materialism, which in turn led to less happiness.

Overall, the convergence of research on the relation between advertising and materialism is compelling. Moreover, research also shows a clear *negative* relation between materialism and general well-being and happiness. Perhaps for this reason, as well as the inability of children to adequately combat advertising messages, a number of countries or provinces, including Sweden, Norway, Greece, and Quebec (Canada) have either banned or severely restricted advertising to children. Such a ban was proposed by the United States Federal Trade Commission in 1978, but the ban was ultimately defeated.

—L. J. Shrum

See also Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Branding; Cognitive Development, Media and; Consumerism; Media Literacy Programs

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ADVERTISING, PARENT-CHILD CONFLICT AND

It is often assumed that advertising contributes to conflicts between parents and children. The underlying idea here is that advertising encourages children to ask for the advertised products. Because parents do not want to comply with all these product requests, they have to say no to their children more often. As a result, the chance of conflicts between the parent and child increases.

Studies of the effects of advertising on children's request behavior have consistently demonstrated that children who often watch commercial television ask their parents for products more often. In addition, there is also evidence of a relation between children's advertising-induced purchase requests and the occurrence of parent-child conflicts. However, researchers have suggested a number of child and family variables that may affect the relation between advertising and parent-child conflict.

CHILD INFLUENCES

The chance of parent-child conflict as a result of children's advertising exposure may vary for children in different age groups and for boys and girls.

Age

Younger children make more advertising-induced purchase requests and come into conflict with their parents about advertised products more often than do older children. There are several explanations for this moderating effect of age. Research has shown that younger children are more vulnerable to persuasive information, because they have less experience and domain-specific knowledge that they can use while processing commercials. They are, therefore, less able to come up with critical thoughts and counterarguments while watching commercials, which enhances the likelihood that they will ask for advertised products.

A second reason for a stronger effect of advertising on parent-child conflict among younger children is that younger children more often have difficulty delaying gratifications than do older children. If young children see something as attractive, they focus all their attention on the enticing aspects of this stimulus and find it very difficult to resist, which may increase the chance of parent-child conflict.

Finally, the decrease in advertising-induced parent-child conflict with age may be a result of children's growing ability to apply sophisticated persuasion techniques. Research has shown that young children quite often ask, whine, and show anger in order to persuade their parents. Older children, in contrast, tend to use more sophisticated persuasion techniques, such as negotiation, flattery, and white lies. Such sophisticated persuasion strategies generally lead to less parent-child conflict than the persuasion strategies of younger children do.

Gender

The effect of advertising on parent-child conflict is often stronger for boys than for girls. Boys are generally more persistent in their requests for advertised products than girls are. They more often rely on forceful or demanding strategies when trying to persuade their parents, whereas girls are more likely to rely on tact and polite suggestions. The subtle persuasion strategies used by girls may decrease the chance of parent-child conflict.

FAMILY INFLUENCES

In addition to child variables, the relation between children's advertising exposure and conflict with their parents is moderated by two family variables: socioeconomic status and family communication processes.

Socioeconomic Status

The chance of advertising-induced parent-child conflict is generally higher in families with low socioeconomic status (SES) than in higher-status families. There is evidence that children from low-SES families make more advertising-induced purchase requests than high-SES children do. One explanation for this difference is that low-SES children tend to watch more television, which may stimulate their advertising-induced purchase requests behavior. Another explanation is that parents of low-SES families discuss advertising effects with their children less often than high-SES parents do, which may put low-SES children at a disadvantage in protecting themselves against advertising influences

In addition, there is evidence that the relation between purchase requests and parent-child conflict is stronger in low-SES than in high-SES families. This means that a request made by a child in a low-SES family more easily results in a parent-child conflict than a request made by a child in a high-SES family. One explanation might lie in the likely higher refusal rate due to limited monetary resources in lower-SES families. Another explanation might be that low-income parents employ less sophisticated strategies for conflict resolution. It has been demonstrated, for instance, that parents in low-SES families more often use coercive methods to deal with family conflicts than parents in high-SES families do.

Family Communication Processes

Finally, the effect of advertising on parent-child conflict is moderated by family communication processes. By discussing consumer matters and advertising content, often referred to as *parental mediation*, parents are able to increase their children's defenses against advertising and to mitigate advertising-induced purchase requests. Two types of communication processes regarding children's advertising exposure have been identified in the literature: *active mediation* and *restrictive mediation*. Active mediation is focused on family discussions about advertising and consumer matters, whereas restrictive mediation is mainly focused on obedience and protecting children from advertising.

The chance of advertising-induced parent-child conflict is considerably lower in families that often discuss consumer and advertising matters than in families that attempt to prevent children from watching commercials. It has been suggested that active mediation is more effective in counteracting advertising effects because it actively teaches children to become critical consumers, which in turn may reinforce their defenses against advertising. Restrictive mediation may be less able to counteract the effects of advertising because it does not teach children about advertising and consumer matters and thus does not help them to learn and apply defenses against advertising.

—Moniek Buijzen and Patti M. Valkenburg

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Advertising, Regulation of; Purchase Influence Attempts

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ADVERTISING, PERSUASIVE INTENT OF

The child's understanding of the persuasive intent of advertising has been an issue in the literature on advertising and marketing to children for more than 30 years. Why should this be so? In the early 1970s, various lobbying groups in the United States were concerned about the content of television advertising to children and petitioned first the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and then the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to regulate advertising to children and, as the movement took hold, to ban advertising to children. The years since then have seen similar flurries of concern coming and going on a global scale, culminating in the recent anxieties about food advertising to children in the light of a worldwide increase in obesity. One of the arguments put forward was that children were vulnerable to advertising and,

in particular, to the persuasive techniques used. In essence, the issue was whether commercial advertisements were inherently unfair and deceptive when aimed at young, impressionable children. If children cannot understand the intent behind advertising, there is a good case that it is unfair to allow advertising to be directed to them. Psychologists and other professionals can contribute to this debate by finding out the age at which children do understand.

It is, however, difficult to establish an age at which it can be said that most children understand the intent of advertising. The concept of *advertising literacy* suggests that several different abilities are required to understand advertising, and each of these can have its own trajectory of development with different rates for different children. We do know that most young children younger than about 6 years of age see advertising as merely entertainment. By 8–9 years, most children, when interviewed, will claim that advertising "tries to get you to buy stuff," and often this is cited as evidence that children understand the commercial and persuasive functions of advertising. By early adolescence, skepticism toward advertising has developed fully. The question of what happens between these ages is less easily answered. It seems that children begin to realize that advertising provides information, as well as being simply fun, at about 7 years of age, but an understanding that this information is persuasive emerges later. Just knowing that information about brands and products is being provided, without an understanding that it is designed to get the audience to purchase, is evidence that children are potentially at risk at that age. Knowing that advertising provides selective information—information that gives only positive information about the brand—is an ability that seems to emerge at about 7 years of age, with most children able to recognize that advertising does not say negative things about brands by 8–9 years.

So does this mean that the answer can be found in the evidence? The answer must be yes, and we now know that an approximate age of 7–8 years is crucial in terms of an emerging ability on the part of the child to discern and evaluate the advertiser's persuasive intent. There is an emerging consensus in the literature that children under the age 8 or thereabouts cannot really understand that the intention of advertising is to persuade and influence buying behavior, and some children show only a dangerous partial understanding—they may think that it is simply information about brands. So should we protect younger children from advertising but place no restrictions on advertising to adolescents and older children because they are no different, in this respect, from adults? The situation is more complex. There is no consensus on any single definitive age as the time when advertising is understood. However, research suggests that younger children understand the intent of advertising better now than in previous years, which would suggest that children are getting more sophisticated with advertising. But there is another more sobering finding. Samples used have been limited to predominantly white children. When African American children were sampled, the lack of awareness of the purpose of advertising was considerably greater.

Knowing something does not necessarily mean that one will put that knowledge into practice, and this is particularly the case with children. Debbie John, in an authoritative review in 1999, argued that younger and older children process and use information in different ways. Children under 7 years of age are seen as limited processors. In the language of information processing, children have mediational deficiencies that make storage and retrieval difficult even when they are prompted and cued to do so. Children over 12 years of age, on the other hand, are able to use various strategies for storing, retrieving, and utilizing information, and that can be done in the absence of prompting and cueing. Between the ages of 7 and 11, however, although children might be able to deploy strategies to enhance information storage and retrieval that are similar to those used by older children, they need to be aided by explicit prompts and cues. This suggests that, even if children understand intent, they will not be able to use this understanding and cognitively defend against advertising in all circumstances and contexts until 12 years of age.

In summary, research evidence has established that preschool children see advertising as existing only to entertain. Children gradually acquire an understanding of advertising, and most children have an adequate understanding of the intent behind advertising by 9 years of age. However, it is not until 12 years of age that children are able to use this understanding independently of external cues to defend against these persuasive messages.

—Brian M. Young

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Literacy, Aims and Purposes of; Media Literacy Programs

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ADVERTISING, PROGRAM-LENGTH COMMERCIALS IN

The marketing of toys associated with characters and themes of popular television shows is now commonplace. Television advertising, however, has transcended the 30-second commercial. Television programs themselves have become part of the marketing effort through program-length commercials. Dale Kunkel defines program-length commercials as programs that are originally conceived as vehicles for promoting products to the child audience. The purpose is to create awareness of a product line (e.g., GI Joe action figures) with the goal of increasing product sales and program popularity.

Historically, a television program was created to entertain or inform the viewing audience, with marketing of products to follow if that program was successful. In the case of program-length commercials, the creative process may be reversed (i.e., creating the product and then the program), or program and toys may be developed simultaneously. Within the literature, several terms are used to describe this phenomenon: *program-length commercial, product-related programming, toy-based programming,* and *toy-based cartoons.* These terms are used interchangeably in this entry.

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM-LENGTH COMMERCIAL

In response to complaints and subsequent research about excessive advertising targeting children, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) created policies in 1974 that required broadcasters to limit the amount of advertising during children's programs and to clearly separate commercial content from program content. This meant that program-commercial separation devices (also called *bumpers*) should be used, that host selling was inappropriate, and that product-related programming was prohibited. In 1983, the FCC then reversed many of its earlier policy decisions. During this period of deregulation, it was argued that marketplace forces would provide adequate regulation. Program-length commercials were legitimized, and they significantly increased in number during the mid- to late 1980s. Popular programs included *He-Man & the Masters of the Universe* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.* In addition to government deregulation, Kunkel describes a convergence of factors, including structural changes in the broadcasting industry, new strategies for financing and distributing programming, and significant growth of toy marketing, as important contributors to the program-length commercial phenomenon.

Some years later, in response to the Children's Television Act of 1990, the FCC reinstated the ban on program-length commercials; however, it also changed the definition of this type of programming. The program-length commercial was more narrowly defined as a program associated with a product in which commercials for that product are aired. This new definition excluded product-related programming separated from the related toy advertisement by filler content (the norm).

EFFECTS OF PROGRAM-LENGTH COMMERCIALS

The research examining children's understanding of advertising in general demonstrates that children below about age 5 have difficulty discriminating programs from advertisements and that not until around age 7 or 8 do they recognize the persuasive intent underlying advertising. Interestingly, younger children tend to distinguish an advertisement from a television program

based upon perceptual features (e.g., ads are shorter than programs) rather than conceptual differences (e.g., ads are persuasive and programs are entertaining). Content analyses have established that program-length commercials share many of the same formal features used in traditional advertisements, hence exacerbating confusion children may experience.

Researchers have investigated the effects of program-length commercials with particular attention to discrimination between program and advertisement, recognition of persuasive intent, and influence on children's play behaviors. Barbara Wilson and Audrey Weiss (1992) randomly assigned 94 females ages 4–11 to one of three conditions: a cartoon immediately followed by an ad relating to cartoon content (adjacent condition); a cartoon immediately followed by an unrelated ad, but with a related ad shown earlier (nonadjacent condition); or ads shown with unrelated cartoons (control condition). The advertising used in the study consisted of (1) *Popeye* cartoon, Froot Loops ad, *Beetlejuice* cartoon, and *Beetlejuice* ad (adjacent condition); (2) *Beetlejuice* cartoon, Froot Loops ad, *Popeye* cartoon, and *Beetlejuice* ad (nonadjacent condition); and (3) *Popeye* cartoon, Froot Loops ad, different *Popeye* cartoon, and *Beetlejuice* ad (control condition). Young children (4–6 years) were less able to distinguish a toy advertisement from a toy-based cartoon when viewed in the adjacent or nonadjacent condition. Older children (7–11 years) did not demonstrate this confusion. Wilson and Weiss emphasized that perceptual features seemed to overwhelm other types of cues that younger children frequently use in making discrimination judgments.

In addition to difficulties with program-ad discrimination, research indicates that program-length commercials and their related toys have detrimental effects on children's imaginative play. One can easily see how the advertised toys may act as visual cues for the story lines and actions the children have just watched in the associated television programs, thereby leading to imitation rather than imagination. Patricia Greenfield and colleagues (1993) explored this issue by asking first- and second-grade children to tell a story using specific toys (Smurfs or Trolls) both before and after viewing a product-based cartoon (Smurfs) or playing a dot game. Imagination was defined as any form of representational activity that creates entities or events not found in the toy-based cartoon.

The findings revealed that the combination of toy-based cartoons and their related toys resulted in the lowest proportion of creative imagination (i.e., parts of the child's story were not found in the preceding toy-based cartoon) and conversely the highest imitation; the combination of toy-based cartoon plus neutral or unrelated toys yielded intermediate proportions of creative imagination; and the combination of a game plus cartoon-related toys yielded the highest proportions of creative imagination. The effect was strongest for first-grade children and did not exist for second-grade children. Toy-based cartoons in combination with the related toys had stronger detrimental effects on imaginative play than did the cartoon-related toys themselves. Notably, the content (Smurf cartoon) was prosocial in nature and was imitated by the children during their play. As Greenfield and colleagues suggest, the serious implication of this finding surrounds the types of characters presented in many program-length commercials. Antisocial television models will also be incorporated into children's play.

—Ronda M. Scantlin

See also Advertising, Effects on Children; Imagination, Effects of Television on

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ADVERTISING, PURCHASE REQUESTS AND

Over the past two decades, marketers of toys and children's products have developed a diverse spectrum

of strategies to reach the child consumer. An important explanation for the increased interest in children is that the marketing world has discovered that today's children represent three different markets. First, they form a *primary market*. They have considerable amounts of money to spend on needs and wants of their own, which qualify them as a significant primary market. Children, however, also form an *influence market* in that they have considerable influence on family purchases. Not only do they give direction to the selection of food and snacks, they also have a say in the choice of restaurant or the make of the new car. Finally, they represent a *future market*. Adults often remain loyal to the brands they liked when they were children. When manufacturers influence the brand attitudes of children, there is therefore a considerable chance that these favorable attitudes will last into adulthood.

The fact that children have been discovered as three markets in one has major consequences for the commercial environment of children. For example, the amount of television advertising aimed at young children has increased considerably in the past decades. At present, there is more advertising aimed at young children than at teenagers. In addition to advertising, marketers of children's products increasingly utilize other, less obvious marketing practices that usually create less irritation among parents and adults, such as sponsoring of children's media entertainment or product placement. The frequent drinking of Coca-Cola in some comedies or soaps is an example of product placement.

To what extent does exposure to advertising increase children's purchase requests? The studies that have been conducted to date all demonstrated that children who often watch commercial television ask their parents for products more often (see Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003, for a review of these studies). In the majority of studies, the reported correlations were around $r = .30$. This correlation coefficient means that children who watch commercial television at above-median levels have, on average, a chance of 65% of asking for advertised products, whereas children who watch at below-median levels have, on average, a chance of 35% of asking for products. Such a difference in the request behavior between light and heavy watchers of commercial television is, of course, very important to advertisers and marketers—certainly important enough to invest large amounts of money in extensive advertising campaigns for children's products.

—Patti M. Valkenburg and Moniek Buijzen

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Parent-Child Conflict and; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Advertising, Regulation of; Food Advertising, Obesity and

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ADVERTISING, REGULATION OF

Advertising can facilitate a free flow of information about goods and services that stimulates competition among firms and is crucial for the function of a market economy. Within a capitalist economic system, advertising is also a valuable source of information for consumers who buy products and services. Although advertising helps market performance by transferring useful information to consumers and by allowing firms to compete with each other to provide better and cheaper products and services, it may at times convey unfair, deceptive, or fraudulent messages to consumers. Thus, there is a need to regulate advertising to promote fair and useful advertising for firms and consumers as well as to counteract the negative effects of deceptive messages on market performance. Because a number of industries now target children and adolescents with advertising in a variety of media, the government—through the Federal Trade Commission—has addressed special efforts that may be needed to counter deceptive advertising toward young people. The advertising industry itself has also implemented measures to address such practices.

THE FREEDOM OF COMMERCIAL SPEECH AND REGULATION OF ADVERTISING

Before the 1970s, the courts generally ruled that advertising was not entitled to any protection under

the First Amendment. In a series of decisions during the 1970s, however, the U.S. Supreme Court made several landmark decisions that clearly stated that advertising can be protected under the First Amendment as a form of speech. For example, in *Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council* (1976), the Court voided a statute that made it unprofessional conduct for a licensed pharmacist to advertise the prices of prescription drugs. In ruling on a suit brought by consumers to protect their right to receive such information, the Court held that it is in the public interest to have such information about prices. The Court later held that lawyers, too, had the right to advertise prices.

Advertising, or *commercial speech,* as the Court termed it, however, is protected to a "lesser degree" under the First Amendment than other forms of speech such as political or individual speech. The Court has made it clear that commercial speech is linked inextricably to commercial activity, and thus such speech is entitled to a limited measure of protection. This leaves room to regulate advertising under certain circumstances.

TYPES OF ADVERTISING REGULATION

By the early 1990s, the marketplace had become more complex. Consumerism and government regulations brought an end to a market governed by the classical libertarian principle of *caveat emptor,* "let the buyer beware," which put the responsibility for ensuring product quality and interpreting product information on the consumer who bought the product or service. The marketplace is now under the principle of *caveat venditor*, "let the seller beware," which puts the responsibility on the seller of the product or service. Thus, the government and the marketplace as a whole regulate product information, including advertising, to protect consumers as well as competition.

Advertising regulation comes from many sources. The most stringent regulation of advertising is by the federal and state government agencies that enforce the laws enacted by Congress or state legislatures. There are other institutions and organizations that regulate advertising. Consumer groups, for example, are a powerful force that regulates advertising by putting pressure on firms regarding truth and ethics in advertising. Individual advertisers and advertising agencies regulate advertising by self-policing advertising contents. Media firms also regulate advertising by screening the advertisements before placement.

Government Agencies

Federal and state agencies regulate advertising by enforcing laws relevant to advertising, but federal regulation is far more important and powerful than state or local level regulation. Although many different branches of the federal government regulate advertising, the most influential federal agency is the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). It is the most influential government agency regulating advertising not only because it has more policing and preventive power on deceptive advertising than any other government agency but also because other regulatory institutions, such as the courts and such self-regulatory bodies as the National Advertising Division (NAD) and the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the National Advertising Review Council (NARC), use the guidelines the FTC has established. The FTC's primary task is to police and prevent unfair and deceptive business practices, including advertising. Once an advertising practice is found to be unfair or deceptive, the FTC can impose legal actions such as a consent order, a cease and desist order, or corrective advertising. The FTC may also publicize the case by posting it on its website or by releasing a statement to the press. Other federal agencies include the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the United States Postal Service (USPS), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Unlike the FTC, however, most federal agencies' regulation of advertising is limited by type of media or type of product.

Essentially, the FTC examines advertising practices from the target consumer's point of view. For example, an ad targeted toward teenagers will be examined from the teenagers' point of view, while an ad targeted toward the elderly will be examined from their perspective. In deciding whether an ad is deceptive, the FTC asks how a "reasonable person" would interpret an ad, where the reasonable person is considered to be to a consumer of average prudence and ordinary sense who uses ordinary care and skill. Historically, however, the FTC has paid special attention to "vulnerable" consumers, or audiences such as children, minorities, people who are sick, and the elderly. Specifically, the FTC applies a higher level of scrutiny in examining ads targeted to these vulnerable groups. For example, the FTC will pay special attention to advertising targeted toward children under

13 because children lack the analytical abilities and judgment of adults in receiving advertising messages. Some critics feel that these specially protected classes are too narrowly defined and should include other vulnerable groups. For example, they argue that teenagers older than 13 are also more vulnerable because they may not have fully developed analytical abilities and judgment skills, yet no specific legal and governmental protection is directed toward them.

In addition to regulating advertisers, advertising agencies may also be held legally responsible for misleading and deceptive claims in advertising. The FTC, for example, looks at two criteria in determining whether the advertising agency should be held liable for misleading and deceptive contents in advertising. Specifically, the FTC examines the extent of the agency's participation in the preparation of the advertisement and whether the agency knew or should have known that the advertisement included false or deceptive claims. If the agency meets either of these two criteria, it will also be held liable, and the FTC will take appropriate actions toward the agency.

Consumer Groups

The consumer movement gained much power during the 1960s and 1970s partly due to militant leaders such as Ralph Nader. Many consumer groups today are well-organized and equipped with the human and monetary resources to exert social pressure on business. The primary concern of most consumer groups is to secure the rights and power of consumers. One distinctive aspect of the consumer movement is that consumer groups at times regulate or attempt to control advertising on the basis of ethical concerns such as sexual content in advertising. All other regulatory institutions, such as government agencies or self-regulatory organizations, generally cannot regulate advertising based on ethical concerns. Further, unlike other regulatory forces, the actions of consumer groups tend to be swift and powerful. With government regulation as well as industry self-regulation, it generally takes a lot more time to reach a final decision and to impose sanctions on advertising, because of the procedures that must be followed. Consumer groups, however, can quickly organize boycotts, and they can quickly release negative publicity once a decision is made.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is a form of private regulation in which the industry voluntarily reinforces rules of behavior among member companies. Self-regulation is undertaken by advertisers, advertising agencies, and media to protect the member companies and the consumer from deceptive or problematic advertising content.

In the Unites States, the most notable self-regulation programs are the ones undertaken by industry groups and trade associations. For example, the Council of Better Business Bureaus self-regulates local advertising, and NAD and CARU self-regulate national advertising. NAD routinely monitors all forms of national advertising to ensure truth and accuracy of national advertising to adults, and CARU monitors and receives complaints about national broadcast advertising directed toward children under the age of 12. CARU has been successfully reinforcing its Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children's Advertising. These guidelines require that advertisers should be sensitive to the level of knowledge and sophistication of children. The guidelines also urge advertisers to make a constructive contribution to the social development of children by emphasizing positive and constructive social norms in content of advertising.

Advertisers and advertising agencies exercise control over the advertising they produce. Because advertisers are responsible for the content in advertising, many advertisers have internal or external legal staff who screen all product claims and advertising presentations before the advertisement is placed in the media.

In addition, many media firms have detailed written guidelines and self-regulate advertising through an internal review process. Major network broadcast stations, for example, review all commercials prior to broadcast. Based on the review, the network stations may accept or reject the commercial or request revision. Network stations may also receive storyboards or story lines of commercials for review. If the storyboard or story line is acceptable, and if the advertiser or advertising agency submits the actual commercial based on the storyboard or story line, the commercial will be accepted for broadcast. The major television networks also have their own guidelines for advertising aimed at children. The guidelines generally restrict the use of celebrities, prohibit exhortative language (such as "Tell your mom to buy this product"), and limit the excessive use of animation in children's commercials.

Many big print media firms also have written guidelines and a formal review process. Small print media firms, however, may not have written guidelines or formal review processes.

—Sang Lee

See also Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Federal Trade Commission (FTC); Food Advertising, Regulation of; Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation; Regulation, Television

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ADVERTISING, SEXUALITY IN

In pursuit of the philosophy "sex sells," sexual images are consciously employed in advertising to promote sales of goods and services. The underlying assumption is that sexual stimuli grab the recipients' attention and reinforce the advertising message. The content of sexualized advertisements conveys images and norms relating to sexuality, gender, and gender roles. Such ads may represent or target children and adolescents, and youth may be exposed to them even when they are not targets of the ads. Research into sexual content in the media is generally focused on its problems and the dangers, but future research is needed not only on children and adolescents as victims of sexualized advertising but also as active users of the media who pay selective attention to advertising and may derive some benefits from it.

THE NATURE AND TYPES OF SEXUALIZED ADVERTISING

Sexualized representation of the opposite gender is intended to motivate heterosexual target groups to become consumers of the product advertised, thereby becoming conquerors of the opposite sex (e.g., scantily clad women may be portrayed in a car advertisement aimed at heterosexual men). In addition, each gender in a heterosexual audience is meant to be motivated to consume products advertised by sexualized representations of its own gender, effectively identifying with and imitating the attractive image (e.g., a "sexy" woman advertising perfume for women). At times, attractive models of both sexes are displayed in heterosexual interactivity to enable both of these motivation mechanisms to function within the heterosexual target groups.

Sexual representations consciously inserted into advertising are called *sexual appeals*, which means that they attempt to persuade using appeals containing sexual information. *Sexual information* is any representation that portrays or implies sexual interest, behavior, or motivation. Tom Reichert distinguishes among five types of sexual information in advertising:

1. Nudity/dress, ranging from revelation of individual parts of the body to complete nudity
2. Sexual behavior, individual or interpersonal, portrayed either openly or suggestively
3. Physical attractiveness of the model
4. Sexual referents, subtly referring to objects and events of symbolic sexual significance
5. Sexual embeds, subliminal sexual representations, either recognisable representations of objects without primary sexual significance but endowed with it by the advertising (i.e. objects in the shape of genitalia) or subliminally presented associations not recognisable but yet explicit in their sexuality.

Sexual appeals (a) may represent children and young people, (b) may target children and young people, and (c) may be perceived by children and young people whether they are looking for it or not and even though they are not part of the actual target group.

THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Many studies show an increase in both the number and the explicitness of sexual depictions in the advertising of the Western world, which is reflected in how frequently sexual appeals appear and in how much freedom they are accorded.

The classic products advertised with sexual representation and provocative images (predominantly of the female body) are alcoholic beverages, cosmetic products, fashionable clothing, and automobiles. In 1936, the manufacturer of Woodbury Soap advertised the product with a photograph revealing for the first time the full naked body of a woman. Today, advertising for almost every type of product and consumer goods has a sexualized form, although the advertising message frequently lacks any direct association between the sexual appeal and the product itself. A number of enterprises (among them fashion and perfume houses such as Calvin Klein or Sisley) have been caught in the crossfire of the censors because of their explicit and provocative sexual advertising campaigns, particularly when the models were or appeared to be under age.

Several trends to be noted are related to the presentation of gender roles and stereotypes. First, there has been a decrease in representations of women as classically stereotypical housewives. Today, women are more often portrayed as independent, active people in advertisements. Second, women, particularly young women or even girls, are more frequently presented as sexual objects. Men, too, are being shown in sexual contexts more often and more provocatively. There has likewise been an increase in the depiction of homosexual eroticism in advertisements.

Magazine Advertising

Magazines contain the most frequent and most explicit but also the most artistic representations of sexuality. This is observable, in particular, in lifestyle magazines and those aimed specifically at women or at men—presumably because of the highly specific target groups. In 2003, nearly half the advertisements in American women's magazines and more than three quarters of the ads in men's magazines showed sexually explicit depictions of women. Although there have been several studies on the sexualization of female depictions in advertising (especially within traditional feminist critique of the media), little research has been done on sexualized depictions of men.

Television

There are fewer sexual depictions and allusions on television than in print advertising. In one study of American prime-time television, 12% of the models were only partially clothed, and 8% of the advertisements displayed sexual behavior. These lower percentages can be explained by the fact that television still addresses very large, heterogeneous target groups, particularly in prime-time programs for the general public. Also, many countries have established regulatory committees to monitor TV content, which have set precise limits on the amounts and types of advertising that may be shown at particular times on television. However, television programs shown at nonpeak times and targeted at specific audiences do contain markedly sexualized representations.

The Internet

Because Internet technology uses multimedia and is interactive, advertising on the Internet is much more complex than in magazines or on television. This renders detailed study and description difficult, as certain types of advertising are inaccessible to some users. It is thus possible to make only limited statements about the exact distribution of sexualized advertising on the Internet. However, it can be assumed that there is a great deal of it and that it reaches many recipients. In addition, it is quite common for sexual appeals to be related to products of a sexual nature, so the Internet is a place where sexuality is used to sell sexuality. Digital multimedia, with their potential for configuration, have led to new forms of representation of sexuality on the Web—additional animation, for instance, and stylized images of virtual people frequently far more stereotypical in appearance than real people. (For example, Jacqueline Lambiase has described ads depicting people with exaggerated secondary sexual characteristics.) However, the Internet is interactive and adaptable, such that that sexualized advertising can be suppressed and excluded from one's individual user profile. This is particularly relevant for children and adolescents, for whom it is easier to prohibit Internet material than material from other media.

Mobile Telephones

Mobile telephones are the information and communication devices with the widest international distribution. They are used intensively by adolescents and children from about the age of 9. Today's mobile phones do not act only as telephones but provide other services and products in the information field, including mobile advertisements that arrive as text or graphics

messages, video clips, or interactive games with prizes. Although it is possible for parents and guardians to observe and accompany children with relative ease when they are using television or the Internet, the use of the mobile telephone is private and not subject to direct parental observation. As in the case of online communications, there is an increasing need for technological blocking and filtering processes in the field of mobile communications because of the increasing sexual content of messages and sexualized advertisements. Likewise, young people need better training in using media.

CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AS TARGET GROUPS

In 2002, according to James McNeal, American children aged 4 to 12 influenced approximately $310 billion in family spending and indirectly influenced another $340 billion; this market is also increasing by 20% every year. These numbers clearly indicate that children and adolescents form an extremely important customer target group for advertisers.

In this context, the most relevant advertising is that aimed directly at children and usually seen as part of children's TV programs or in magazines for children and adolescents. The majority of such advertising is for products such as toys, food, and especially sweets. For adolescents and young adults, the range is extended to include advertisements for fashion clothing and cosmetics. It is apparent that, in advertisements targeting children, boys are portrayed in dominant roles with clearly differentiated and active behavior. Girls, in contrast, are shown not only less often but also in a restricted range of roles. In the depiction of girls, the frequent representation of very thin, delicate female models, even in advertising for the under-12s, is striking.

Children and adolescents are also exposed to advertising that does not directly address them as consumers. Considering that the average TV consumption of an 8-to-12-year-old American child is 30 hours a week, any consideration of children and adolescents must take account of the general effects of advertising.

RESPONSES TO SEXUAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Precisely because it is such an effective signal, children and adolescents may not be sufficiently critical in their responses to sexual advertising. In this context, the concept of *coping skills* for advertising (the ability to deal with advertising in a critical manner, which can be encouraged at school as well as at home) becomes important. The two most important skills are the ability to dissociate advertisements from editorial content and the ability to understand the commercial intentions of advertising. Research has shown that both abilities are largely dependent on the cognitive development of the child or adolescent. Recent studies have demonstrated in comparatively young children a yet-earlier growth of skills in coping with advertising. However, it can be assumed that the commercial intentions of advertising are not fully grasped until adolescence. Because adolescents aspire to sexual maturity and a secure gender identity, they are particularly susceptible to representations of attractive images of "maleness" and "femaleness" in advertising and are thus encouraged to engage in uncritical consumer behavior.

Research on advertising effects has shown that sexual stimuli or erotic representations indeed can serve to intensify the attention a recipient devotes to an advertisement. However, sexual appeals have a negative influence on the memorization of brands because the strength of sexual stimuli as signals diverts the attention from the actual product. In spite or because of the strong human reaction to sexual stimuli, some people develop an antipathy toward sexualized advertising and its now-widespread occurrence. Opinion polls show that the majority of responding recipients consider that advertising has become excessively sexual. To date, there has been no specific investigation of the extent to which children and adolescents react to sexual advertising—whether positively, perhaps with curiosity, or negatively, with disgust.

A particularly difficult area is access by children and adolescents to advertisements not intended for them, such as late-night television commercials or ads on the Internet containing sexual or even pornographic material. A one-sided, stereotypical representation of girls and women is a further problem, as are images of "ideal," excessively slender girls and women (in ads for cosmetics and fashion clothing), especially as this advertising is frequently targeted at children and adolescents. The effects of such advertising on young people have barely been touched upon in research, and ethical difficulties limit the possibility of doing so. The findings from research into possible negative effects on adult attitudes, however, imply that there are grave dangers. Young people may develop

increased dissatisfaction with their own bodies, may desire to be too thin, and may have an increased probability of developing eating disorders.

Another skill required in coping with sexualized advertising is the capacity to distinguish between fact and fiction. Because children and adolescents possess only limited sexual experience, they are less able than adults to recognize whether an erotic or sexual scenario used for advertising purposes is representative of socially acceptable and everyday role models or, rather, is behavior that could induce unrealistic expectations or inappropriate social behavior. The less a person knows beforehand about a field of behavior, the greater is the probability that its depiction in the media will be taken uncritically as realistic.

Child protection considerations would dictate that the dangers of sexualized advertising should be countered, first by the regulation of production and distribution and second by appropriate education concerning the media. Studies have shown that children's coping skills vis à vis advertising indeed can be enhanced by relevant training. A useful approach is the development of appropriate media training packages, which, insofar as they relate to sexualized advertising, would also have to contain some explanation of the facts of life. Furthermore, the importance of technological progress must not be ignored. The adaptive or sorting mechanisms enabling digitized media content to be matched to the current user or target group are constantly increasing. Technical filtering systems may make it possible to protect young people from dubious media content.

POSITIVE MESSAGES IN SEXUAL ADVERTISEMENTS

If we view advertising as a reflection of the society in which it arose, the Western world's shift in values toward secularism, individualism, and liberalism are clearly recognizable, as evidenced in increasingly provocative advertising and new ways of depicting gender roles. Increasingly explicit sexual representation is contributing to sexuality's becoming less of a taboo subject in society generally, which can be seen, at least to some extent, as positive.

Examples of messages from sexualized advertising that may be beneficial and supportive to the development of children and adolescents include the idea that there is pleasure in erotic and sexual behavior; the recognition that these spheres of life can be openly shown and spoken of; the acceptance of both heterosexuality and homosexuality in the world; an understanding that heterosexual girls and women are not only sexual objects but also sexual subjects; and the recognition that attractiveness need not always coincide with stereotypical male and female icons but can also be androgynous (as, for example, girls with cropped hair and boyish clothing).

Of course, it will be subjective values that dictate which aspects of sexual appeals are viewed as positive. The question may be asked both theoretically and empirically whether and to what extent young people experience sexual advertising as a beneficial phenomenon fostering their personal development. Almost no studies to date have analyzed the nature and context of young people's interpretation of commercial sexual messages, how they discuss them in their peer groups, or how they adapt them creatively and artistically.

The fact that research into sexual content in the media is generally focused on its problems and the dangers, practically always ignoring any possible positive effects, is connected to the fact that research funding is usually easier to obtain for purposes of child protection. This suggests that future research could well concern itself with children and adolescents not only as the passive victims of sexualized advertising but—depending on their ages—as active users of the media who pay selective attention to advertising and often deal with or exploit it in their own way, constructively. Conclusions already reached should be tested further with more differentiated groups. Such differentiation could take account of both negative effects and possible constructive internalization.

—Denise Sommer and Nicola Döring

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial, Sex, Media Impact on; Sex in Television, Perceived Realism of; Sexual Content, Age and Comprehension of; Sexualization of Children

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ADVERTISING, VIEWER AGE AND

Children often encounter advertising and observe consumer behavior while very young. As children mature, their attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral responses toward advertising change. Developmental theory, in conjunction with marketing and advertising theory, suggests that children progress through various stages as they become full-fledged consumers in society. Research suggests that, although children are making purchases without adult supervision by the time they enter kindergarten, they do not understand the persuasive intent of advertising. Children develop as consumers throughout childhood, and, as they mature, their responses to advertising change.

INFANTS AND TODDLERS (AGES 0–2)

Research suggests that the first stage of consumer development occurs at a very young age. Infants can express their interest in particular sounds, smells, and tastes and even in television programs by 4–5 months of age. They also begin to be socialized as consumers through observation of their parents and caretakers while shopping. Scholars suggest that children begin to ask for products from parents between the ages of 18 and 24 months; however, they are still learning their roles as consumers and lack the facilities to fully comprehend the selling intent of advertising.

PRESCHOOL (AGES 3–4)

Research suggests that the second stage of consumer development begins for children as they enter the preschool years (ages 3–4). Studies indicate that some preschoolers recognize cartoon trade characters such as Mickey Mouse, although this skill increases with age. Moreover, preschoolers begin to become attached to characters they see on television. Research indicates that some preschoolers are able to distinguish commercials from TV programs, an early step in understanding advertising content; however, studies indicate that this skill is more commonly acquired around age 5.

As developing consumers, preschoolers begin to learn which stores have items that are of interest to them, and in some instances they are allowed to make purchases in the presence of their parents or caretakers. However, studies indicate that parents of preschoolers experience in-store parent-child conflict when they deny purchase requests. This may be a result of preschoolers' limited ability to be distracted from tempting products.

EARLY ELEMENTARY (AGES 5–8)

Research suggests that the third stage of consumer development begins as children enter elementary school. Children begin to make choices and purchase items. Research indicates that children make their first purchases without parental supervision between the ages of 5 and 7. Studies indicate that children become increasingly able to resist temptation and have begun to hone their negotiation skills with parents.

Research suggests that children must take a number of cognitive steps in order to understand the intent of commercials. The first step is to identify commercials and distinguish them from program content. Studies indicate that, by age 5, most children are able to distinguish commercials from television programs, but

their distinctions are very rudimentary. For example, in Scott Ward's (1972) study, young children indicated length ("commercials are shorter than programs") and placement ("before or after show") as the discriminating factors between commercials and programs.

Other steps would involve being able to discern the persuasive intent of advertising and recognize bias. Research suggests that the majority of children are able to articulate the selling intent of advertising by the third grade. As children become aware of the persuasive nature of advertising, they develop the ability to recognize bias and deception in advertising and develop skeptical or negative attitudes in regard to advertising. A consistent finding of the research indicates that, as children mature, they like commercials less and less, and they become less trustful of advertising messages. Studies indicate that children become less entertained and more irritated by commercials. This may result in the development of attitudinal defenses when they encounter advertising content. However, research suggests that these defenses may not be effective after a period of heavy exposure to advertising for toys and games, such as the pre-Christmas season.

Indeed, research suggests that heavy exposure to television advertising does have an impact on the types of items children request as Christmas presents, particularly for younger children. Much of the research regarding children's requests for products focused on their requests for toys during the Christmas season. A common method of data collection is for researchers to relate children's Christmas wish lists to their exposure to television advertising prior to Christmas. One study found that toys with the most frequently advertised brand names were the most often requested and that the number of requests for such toys could be predicted by the extent of children's exposure to the network that aired the most commercials for those brands.

LATE ELEMENTARY (AGES 9–12)

Research suggests that the fourth and final stage of consumer development begins as children progress through their elementary school years and start to evaluate products more closely. They may even begin to collect items such as dolls or baseball cards, to examine these products for quality, and to become cost conscious. Older children begin to lose interest in toys and make fewer requests for advertised products. Peer groups become increasingly important as a socializing force. Furthermore, older children tend to hold a more negative opinion of commercials, often describing them as annoying or in poor taste. This more sophisticated consumer knowledge may then be used as a cognitive defense against advertising tactics.

TEENS (AGES 13–18)

Research suggests that, during the teen years, children's knowledge of advertiser tactics closely resembles that of adults. Teens have an increased awareness of the marketplace and are more likely to recognize the techniques advertisers use for persuasion and to discern when ads are truthful or misleading. Research suggests that the more knowledge youth have about advertising and the marketplace, the more skeptical they become. This is particularly true for teens. Research indicates that factors such as well-developed marketplace knowledge, heavy television viewing, and susceptibility to peer influence enhanced skepticism in teens.

Children mature into functioning consumers throughout their childhood. Their development cognitively and socially enhances their ability to understand the persuasive intent of advertising and marketing tactics used to encourage consumer behavior. Although they still have room to grow and develop, they have experienced all aspects of consumer behavior in their childhood in some basic manner.

—Nancy Jennings

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children; Consumer Development, Phases of

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ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS, PROSOCIAL

Prosocial advertising campaigns use advertising aimed at a particular audience, for a specified period of time, with the aim of achieving a specified goal that is beneficial to society. For example, the national Anti-Drug Campaign mandated by Congress runs ads aimed at teens to prevent drug use. Campaigns may be sponsored by government agencies, nonprofit organizations, commercial enterprises, or coalitions of different groups. Some well-funded campaigns pay for the advertising placements and therefore have more control over when the ads are run. Many campaigns, however, rely on donated time, and the ads run as public service announcements at the discretion of the media organization.

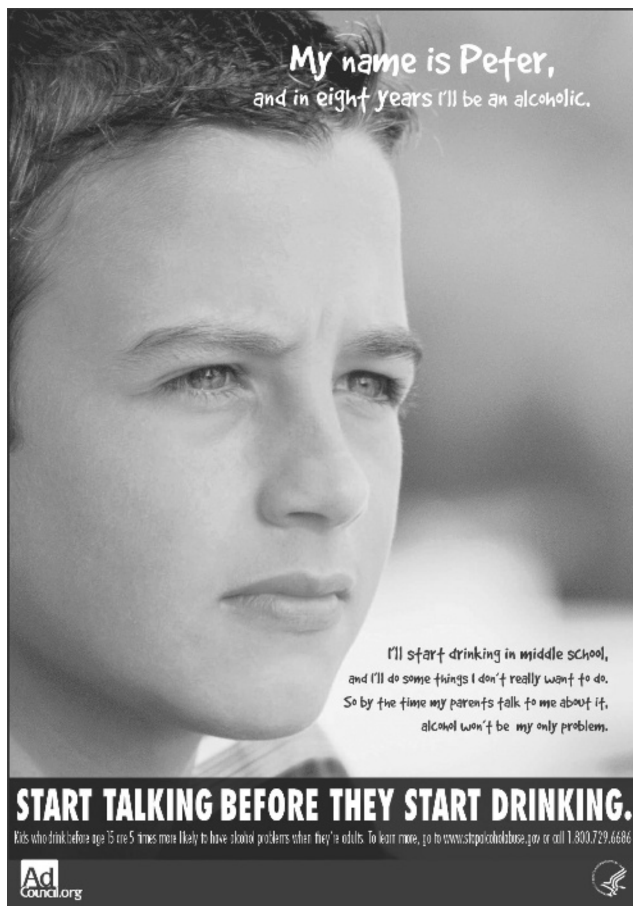
Prosocial advertising is often combined with other organized communication activities as part of a comprehensive communication and social marketing campaign. Campaigns often have greater success when advertising is used in conjunction with other mass media formats (such as news, soap operas, and testimonial programs). Infomercials often, although not always, rely on testimonials—endorsements by real people. Health messages also sometimes use testimonials to make a point. Prosocial campaigns may also use other communication strategies (e.g., using promotional materials such as caps and mugs, sponsoring contests or events, offering professional counseling or workshops in small groups, enhancing communication within communities, and advocating to change policies and alter environments to be more conducive to the desired behavior). For example, a nutrition campaign may advertise healthy foods and also advocate for the reduction of vending machines with unhealthy foods in schools.

Prosocial ad campaigns aimed at large populations of children and adolescents can affect large numbers of young people, although the percentage of the population affected is typically less than 10%. Campaigns promoting a new behavior are more effective than campaigns aiming to prevent or eliminate a negative behavior, and behaviors that can be performed once or a few times are easier to promote than behaviors that need to be repeated often. Youth substance abuse campaigns seem to have about the same effects as substance abuse interventions in schools. Alcohol use reduction and smoking prevention campaigns have a greater impact than campaigns designed to reduce or prevent illegal drug use.

Several theories are used to design better campaigns. Analysis based on developmental, behavior change, and communication theories can help to do several things: (1) identify the persuasive strategy to be used in the campaign (such as whether to emphasize certain pieces of information, risks and other motivational factors, peer norms, types of behaviors, and behavioral skills); (2) select the media and other channels to use in the campaign and determine the timing and frequency of communication; and (3) design the messages. Theory can also guide the selection of young people to target, using criteria such as current behaviors, actual and perceived risk, age at which risky behaviors begin, current knowledge and beliefs, and communication patterns. Theories that are commonly applied to campaigns include the theory of planned behavior, the information-motivation-behavioral skills model, social cognitive theory, information processing theory, and the health belief model.

It is important to carefully define the target audience(s) for the campaign, including their developmental level, to design effective messages and select the most appropriate media and other channels. For example, campaigns aimed at Mexican American teens can be designed to be sensitive to cultural beliefs and communication patterns, abilities, and preferences. Sometimes, campaigns that strive to impact youth also target parents or other people influential in children's lives in order to encourage them to perform a particular behavior on behalf of their children (e.g., bringing children to a clinic or a doctor for immunizations or to reinforce ads directed at kids (e.g., campaigns to increase bike helmet usage have asked coaches to talk to their teams).

To have greater impact, campaigns should aim to maximize the percentage of the target audience that is exposed to the campaign, and they should maintain communication over time. Ad campaigns are more successful when they run an adequate number of ads, use different versions of ads to prevent burnout, use ads that attract attention but are not so complicated that they cannot be remembered, are timed to expose



The "Start Talking Before They Start Drinking" ad campaign was launched in November 2005 and encourages parents to help prevent underage drinking by discussing this issue with their children early and often. These public service announcements (PSAs), developed in collaboration with the Advertising Council, have been distributed through television, radio, and print media, and town hall meetings have been held to reinforce the messages.

young people to the ads when they are more receptive to them, place the ads in a variety of media so that more targeted young people will see them, and use novel approaches.

Emphasizing information that is new to the target group is better than repeating ideas the audience already knows, and information that is positive usually fares better than a focus on only negative consequences of bad behavior. Ideally, all messages that the target groups see on the topic should be consistent with the campaign. Campaigns are also more successful if messages about the enforcement of policies designed to limit the behavior, such as underage purchasing of alcohol or cigarettes, are coupled with enforcement activities by authorities. Effective campaigns also avoid messages that youth would see as "preachy."

The first step in designing a campaign is to conduct research. It is particularly important to understand the desires, constraints, resources, knowledge, beliefs, communication preferences, influential people, current behaviors, and potential for change among the target audiences; the resources available to the sponsoring organization; and the social, political, economic, and legal context of the campaign. When organizations have neither the time nor the resources to conduct extensive research, it is worthwhile to locate an evaluated campaign that has been shown to be effective with a similar target audience and adapt it. The second step in campaign design is to create a communication plan, including specification of the goals of the campaign, target groups, advertising outlets, and persuasive strategy to be used by the ads. Next, the management plan needs to spell out the personnel and resources that will be used and the timetable for all campaign activities, as well as the approach to integration with other organizations and events with similar goals. The fourth step is to develop and pretest the advertisements, prepare any other campaign media messages, and train any people who will have direct contact with the target audience as part of the campaign. Then, the campaign can be implemented. Monitoring should also be in place to track the campaign and readjust the plan as needed. The final step in a campaign is to evaluate the impact of the campaign to provide feedback to the staff and sponsors for the current and future campaigns.

—Leslie Snyder

See also Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

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ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Children are increasingly exposed to advertising from a wide range of sources, including billboards and point-of-purchase advertisements, product placements in movies and video games, pop-up ads on Internet sites, and both direct and indirect advertising in schools. For children under the age of 12, however, television is still their primary source of exposure to advertising. The average child sees more than 40,000 TV commercials each year, and television is still the main venue marketers use to target children under the age of 12.

Children's exposure to advertising on television does not occur only during children's programs. Research shows that even young children are typically exposed to a wide range of television programs (including situation comedies, news, and other adult-oriented programming that is coviewed with parents or is on while children are in the room doing other activities), and that the commercials shown during these programs are likely to attract children's attention even more than the programs themselves. With recent studies showing that more than half of American children have TV sets in their bedrooms (including more than 30% of children ages 2–7), children are also increasingly likely to view commercial messages without the benefit of adult guidance or regulation.

Nonetheless, TV commercials that are shown during programs specifically designed for children still provide the clearest picture of what advertising messages children see and how those messages affect their attitudes and behaviors. Potential for exposure to commercials during children's programs is, in fact, increasing with the proliferation of cable television stations devoted primarily or exclusively to child audiences (e.g., The Cartoon Network, The Disney Channel, Nickelodeon), nearly all of which include commercial messages. Furthermore, the trend is growing for product sponsorships featuring characters from children's TV programs (such as *SpongeBob SquarePants* or *Rugrats*) on product packaging, on clothing, and in children's meals at fast-food restaurants. This blending of program and advertising content is likely to make it even more difficult for young children to understand the persuasive intent of advertising.

CONTENT OF ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

Historically, advertising during children's TV programs refers to programs with a target audience under the age of 12 (primarily cartoons). There are four types of nonprogram messages shown during children's television programs: (1) product commercials; (2) public service announcements (PSAs) and drop-ins (educational messages developed by the network or station, such as *Schoolhouse Rock* or *The More You Know*); (3) station identifications and promos for upcoming shows on the same station; and (4) program-commercial separators (or *bumpers*) that typically say something like, "We'll be right back after these messages." Nearly all of the research in this area has focused on product commercials and program-commercial separation; very little research has been done on children's understanding of PSAs and drop-ins, and almost none has been done on program promos.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Saturday-morning (children's) television was often called "a vast wasteland," partly in reference to what was then perceived as a huge amount of advertising touting toys, junk food, and other unnecessary products to children. During that period, the length of product commercials dropped from an average of 60 seconds to 30 seconds, and by 1983 an hour of Saturday-morning TV contained an average of 14–15 product commercials (7–8 minutes), 5 promos (1–2 minutes), and 3–4 PSAs or drop-ins (2–3 minutes). This was actually a smaller amount of advertising than was found during most other time periods of the broadcast week; weekday daytime programs, for example, typically included about 16 minutes of nonprogram messages per hour, nearly all of which were product commercials.

Since then, both the frequency and the amount of time devoted to product commercials and promos have increased significantly on children's television, while the frequency and time devoted to PSAs and drop-ins have significantly decreased. An average hour of children's TV programming on the major networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox) now contains about

35 nonprogram messages (not including the bumpers), of which about 26 are product commercials (averaging 10.2 minutes), 1 or 2 are PSAs or drop-ins (0.4 minutes), and 8 are promos (2.5 minutes). On cable stations, both the frequency and amount of time devoted to product commercials are lower, although the amount of time devoted to promos is typically higher.

The types of products advertised during children's programs have remained remarkably similar over time, with about 80% consisting of toys and games, cereals, candy and snacks, soda and other sugared beverages, and fast-food restaurants. The ratio of toy commercials to food commercials depends largely on the season of the year; in November and December, the number of toy commercials more than doubles as Christmas approaches, displacing commercials for cereals and snacks. In the past decade, there has been a significant increase in commercials for videos and video games, leisure activities, and recorded music (mostly displacing ads for toys), as well as a slight decrease in advertising for cereals and snacks, and a corresponding increase in advertising for other foods, such as macaroni and cheese, waffles, and yogurt.

Commercials shown during children's programs typically use high levels of special visual and auditory effects, including animation, bright colors, music, sound effects, dancing, and rapid pacing with visual cuts, or edits. Products are typically associated with fun and happiness, and detailed information about the product itself is rarely given. Commercials often feature children and/or animals, along with celebrities and animated characters appearing as spokespersons (such as Tony the Tiger and Ronald McDonald) designed to attract children's attention and aid in memory of the product.

REGULATION OF ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

Only the advertising time for product commercials during children's programs is regulated; there are no regulations governing promos or PSAs. The Children's Television Act of 1990 (CTA) stipulates a limit of 10.5 minutes of advertising per hour on weekend mornings and 12 minutes per hour during other times. Prior to the 1984 deregulation of children's television by the FCC, studies showed an average of only 7–8 minutes of product advertising per hour, with another 2–3 minutes devoted to PSAs and other educational messages. After deregulation, the amount of product commercial time began to climb, whereas the time devoted to PSAs dropped to almost nothing. Although current research indicates that stations are largely complying with the advertising limits established by the CTA, the ceiling it set is significantly higher than the commercial time actually shown in the 1970s and early 1980s, and the time devoted to promos may account for an additional 3 or 4 minutes per hour on some stations.

The inclusion of program-commercial separators (bumpers) during children's TV programs is mandated by the FCC to help alert children to the difference between programs and commercials, although there is no specific requirement for their verbal or visual content. In recent years, the bumpers on some stations have been indistinguishable from station IDs or have even included verbal warnings such as, "Don't you dare change that channel" or "Walking away from your TV set gives you pimples." Research has consistently shown children are not able to distinguish between program and commercial content until the age of 4 or 5, and they do not typically understand the persuasive intent of commercials and the need to view claims and portrayals in them with skepticism until ages 8 or 9. The bumpers do not serve the purpose for which they were intended (i.e., to alert children that commercial content is different from program content and therefore should be viewed differently), and the more recent variations are likely to confuse children even further.

Commercials shown during children's TV programs also frequently contain disclaimers (e.g., "some assembly required," "batteries not included") or other special features (like the shot of a "complete" or "balanced" breakfast used in cereal commercials, in which the box of cereal is the most prominent feature). These disclaimers are often spoken very quickly or written in small letters on the screen, and they may contain wording that is often confusing or misleading for children.

EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING DURING CHILDREN'S TV PROGRAMS

The effects of advertisements on children are generally considered to be one of two types: intended effects (related to increasing positive attitudes about the product, desire for it, and requests or purchases of it), and unintended effects (related to such things as increased parent-child conflict, poor eating habits, illegal alcohol and tobacco use, etc.). The research on intended effects

show that advertisements are remarkably successful; until at least the age of 7 or 8, children enjoy watching commercials, remember them, typically form positive attitudes toward the products, and make frequent requests for purchase. Young children are especially susceptible to these advertising claims because of their more limited capacity to comprehend persuasive intent. Unintended effects are also well documented, especially those related to parent-child arguments over requests for toys and candy and the growing obesity epidemic in the United States, which is believed to be due, in part, to the persuasive appeals for high-sugar and high-fat foods that populate commercials on children's television. However, although there are increasing and well-documented concerns about the effects of tobacco and alcohol advertising on children, those products are virtually never advertised during children's TV programs.

—*Cyndy Scheibe*

See also Action for Children's Television (ACT); Advertising, Host Selling and; Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Program-Length Commercials in; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Advertising, Regulation of; Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Children's Television Act of 1990; Federal Communications Commission, Advertising and; Federal Communications Commission, Deregulation of Children's Programming and; Food Advertising to Children; Promotional Tie-Ins; Television, History of Children's Programs on

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ADVERTISING COUNCIL, THE

The Advertising Council, or the Ad Council, as it is more commonly known, is a private, nonprofit organization best known for its public service announcements aimed at raising awareness of and provoking action on public issues. Formed in 1941 in response to World War II, the Ad Council has taken on many major issues over the years.

Each year, the group selects 40 issues to address through communication programs that reach out to Americans through a variety of media outlets. Campaigns created by the Ad Council must be noncommercial, nondenominational, and nonpolitical. Further, campaigns must be significant, national in scope. and applicable to all Americans. The campaigns are developed free by top advertising agencies, and they are seen by millions through donated media time and space. Many of these campaigns target children's issues, and in 1995 the group made a 10-year commitment to campaigns that speak to America's children, calling it "Commitment 2000." A majority (80%) of the Ad Council's efforts are now dedicated to helping children.

Some of the Ad Council's most memorable campaigns are now icons for millions of Americans, their slogans easily recognizable. In 1944, Smokey the Bear emerged with the slogan "Only you can prevent forest fires." The campaign significantly reduced the acreage lost each year to forest fires. McGruff the Crime Dog surfaced in 1979 and continues to teach children and adults to "take a bite out of crime," asking everyone to take an active role in crime prevention. The Ad Council's campaign for the United Negro College Fund has raised almost $2 billion since 1972 with its "A mind is a terrible thing to waste" campaign. The fund has helped more than 300,000 minority students go to college. And the Crash Test Dummies, introduced in 1985, have significantly increased seat belt usage in the United States. Current child-related issues include adoption, after-school program participation, arts education, safety belt and booster seat education, breastfeeding awareness, bullying prevention, child asthma attack prevention, childhood cancer, drug prevention, early childhood development, high school dropout prevention, math and science for girls, mentoring, modeling nonviolent behavior, parental involvement in schools, secondhand smoke and kids, youth civic engagement, and youth volunteerism, among others.

In addition to its public service campaigns, the Ad Council also conducts research. In the late 1990s, the group released two studies tracking adults' attitudes toward children. In 2000, it released a manual to help nonprofit organizations interest young people in community service. The publication, *Engaging the Next Generation: How Nonprofits Can Reach Young Adults,* was produced in cooperation with two of its partners, the Pew Charitable Trust and MTV. And in 2004, the Ad Council released a report using results of a public opinion poll to make recommendations on how to engage the public to act on the behalf of children (*Turning Point: Engaging the Public on Behalf of Children*).

—Heidi Hatfield Edwards

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

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ADVERTISING IN GIRLS' MAGAZINES

Millions of girls around the world rely on magazines targeted to them for information about the newest fashion and makeup trends, updates on their favorite celebrities, and advice about relationships. In the United States, for example, the combined circulations of the top five teen-targeted magazines totaled more than 6 million during July 2005, with the most popular teen magazine, *Seventeen,* boasting a monthly circulation of 2,108,292, according to *Mediaweek.com's* Magazine Monitor. Research indicates that advertising in these magazines has an impact on teen girls' body images and may also affect their attitudes toward materialism and their overall satisfaction with their lives.

Despite some declines in teen magazine circulation figures and the closures of two popular teen magazines in 2004 and 2005, these magazines continue to play a significant role in the lives of adolescent and preadolescent girls. Researchers have found that girls who regularly read teen magazines use them to help learn how to be "feminine" and how to attract and maintain relationships with boys, although the magazines influence white girls' perceptions of beauty more than they do black girls' beliefs. Other studies have shown that girls believe that teen magazines tell girls that they should strive to be "perfect" like the models who appear in the magazines and that the ideal, which includes having a thin, fit body, perfect eyes, and perfect teeth, is attainable if the reader works hard enough and buys the correct products.

Survey research also has documented the impact of magazines on teenage girls' beliefs about what constitutes the ideal female form and on their satisfaction—and dissatisfaction—with their own figures. The results of a *Teen People* magazine survey, released in August 2005, showed that more than 50% of the 1,500 teenage girls surveyed believed they weighed too much; fewer than one third of white and Hispanic girls and 51% of black girls said they were totally satisfied with their bodies. Nearly 60% of the 13-to-18-year-old girls surveyed said comparing themselves to the models they see in the media, including magazines, makes them feel more insecure about their own bodies.

Studies specifically focusing on the content of advertising in teen girls' magazines have been surprisingly scarce. One study of advertising images in *Seventeen* magazines published in the United States and Japan revealed that two thirds of the ads in the American magazine issues were for cosmetics, including skin and hair care products, fragrances, and makeup. Clothing ads came in a distant second, accounting for about 11% of the ads. The researchers concluded that girls in the Japanese magazine were presented as playful, happy, and girlish, while ads in the American magazine frequently portrayed girls as independent, determined, and defiant. In contrast, another study of the photographs of females in *Seventeen* ads from 2003 revealed that more than half the ads showed women as subordinate to men, and nearly one in four ads included signifiers of "sexuality as power." Researchers examining Australian magazines targeted at teen girls have found that

advertising images of girls are dominated by thin, attractive girls; girls who are athletic-looking are presented far less often and heavy girls almost never. Thus, advertising in the magazines aimed at teen girl readers emphasizes the image girls present to the world as most important. Girls' abilities, interests, and accomplishments—other than those related to their appearance—are presented, at best, as of secondary importance to their value as individuals.

CROSSOVER READERSHIP

A careful search of the published literature revealed no studies focused solely on the effects of girls' exposure to advertising in teen-targeted magazines. However, it is important to note that millions of adolescent girls—including readers and nonreaders of teen-focused magazines—are exposed daily to the advertising content of magazines aimed primarily at adults. Indeed, several recent entries into the teen magazine market—including *Teen People, CosmoGirl, Elle Girl,* and *Teen Vogue*—have been introduced to capitalize on teens' interest in and readership of the adult versions of each magazine (*People, Cosmopolitan, Elle,* and *Vogue*). According to research by the Simmons Market Research Bureau, nearly one quarter of the readership of women's magazines are 12-to-17-year-olds, as are 18% of the readers of fashion magazines. Given adolescent girls' frequent exposure to these adult magazines, and given that at least some of the products and models appearing in women's magazines also may be featured in teen magazine advertising, it is relevant to examine what researchers have discovered about the effects of exposure to the ads in magazines for adult women. The research generally has focused on three major areas: the effects on body image and weight and shape control behaviors, the effects of exposure to alcohol advertising, and the influence of cigarette advertising.

Numerous studies have revealed links between exposure to women's fashion and beauty magazines and disordered eating attitudes and behaviors. In one study, for instance, Renée Botta (2003) concluded that there was a marginal correlation between reading fashion magazines and bulimic behaviors among girls; however, reading health and fitness magazines was related to higher levels of bulimic and anorexic behaviors and an increased drive for thinness. Among Botta's study participants, women who more often compared themselves to the images of women published in magazines were more likely to engage in anorexic and bulimic behaviors and reported a higher drive for thinness and lower body satisfaction. Other researchers have found that reading beauty and fashion magazines was significantly related to high school girls' dieting behaviors, even after anxiety about weight and exercise frequency were considered. Although images of thin women appear in numerous media channels, magazine images seem to produce the strongest effects on girls' beliefs about the importance of thinness and the behaviors they engage in to try to achieve the media-depicted ideal. For instance, recent research by Kristen Harrison (2001) demonstrated that exposure to "thin-ideal" television programming was not correlated with eating disorder symptoms among teenage girls. However, exposure to thin-ideal magazines was associated with anorexia among girls in 6th, 9th, and 12th grades and with bulimia among girls in the two older age groups. In addition, exposure to sports magazines—in which models typically are lean *and* muscular—was associated with body dissatisfaction among 12th-grade girls.

Much of the research on the connections between magazine exposure and girls' body dissatisfaction and eating disorders has demonstrated that magazine reading is linked to negative body attitudes and sometimes to unhealthy behaviors, but most have not been able to demonstrate that exposure to magazine images *causes* girls to be dissatisfied with their bodies or to engage in unhealthy weight control behaviors. However, at least one experimental study conducted in Australia lends support to the idea that exposure to magazine advertising increases girls' concerns about their weight. In this study, female college undergraduates viewed magazine advertisements showing the full image of a woman, a woman's body part only, or a product image. After viewing images portraying the thin ideal for women, the students reported more dissatisfaction with their own bodies and more negative moods. The researchers pointed out that their findings were particularly disturbing given that the undergraduates had been exposed to these thin images for only a brief period—about 10 minutes—suggesting that girls who regularly read the typical women's fashion or fitness magazines may be setting themselves up for negative moods, body dissatisfaction, and the feeling that they *must* try to achieve the image of perfection they see in the magazine ads. This effect may not be limited only to girls who are already concerned about their weight; Harrison's study demonstrated that the links between magazine exposure and eating disorder

symptoms held even for girls who reported no prior interest in body improvement content.

While the majority of the research has linked magazine images with girls' weight control concerns and behaviors, more recent research suggests that viewing magazine models also may influence girls' satisfaction with their breast size. Experimental, survey, and qualitative research published in the past few years has demonstrated that media depictions of thin yet busty women may influence girls' satisfaction with the size of their breasts. Because breast tissue is primarily fat, girls who diet or exercise to achieve the media ideal of thinness are simultaneously working against their desire for larger breasts. In other words, for most girls the only way to achieve the media ideal of a thin waist and hips, coupled with larger breasts, is through breast augmentation surgery. Although 75% of the girls in the *Teen People* survey said they never would consider having plastic surgery, the statistics indicate that the number of teenage girls getting breast implants has been increasing rapidly. The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery reported that, between 2002 and 2003, the number of breast implant surgeries among girls 18 and younger nearly tripled, from 3,872 to 11,326.

However, the research on the effects of images of women in magazine ads on girls is not totally consistent. A few studies have provided evidence that sociocultural influences, including the feedback parents and friends give girls about their body shape and weight, are far more important than any media influences. Girls whose parents and friends encourage them to lose weight and to strive for thinness may be far more at risk than those whose parents and friends urge them to accept their bodies as they are, regardless of how much time girls spend looking at magazine advertisements. Other research has suggested that what girls *do* when they are looking at magazine advertising images of females may be more important than how many images girls view or how often they are exposed to those images. Girls who compare their own bodies to those of the models they see in advertising seem to be more at risk, whereas girls who can view the ads without making these comparisons seem less likely to be affected by the ads.

ALCOHOL ADS

The American magazines targeted to teenage girls do not carry alcohol advertisements. This results from two factors: Teen-oriented magazines generally do not accept alcohol advertising, and all three of the major alcohol industry associations voluntarily prohibit their members from advertising in media for which the majority of the audience is younger than the legal drinking age. However, as noted in the previous section, crossover readership of magazines means that teenage girls may be regularly exposed to alcohol advertising through their readership of magazines targeted to an older audience.

This exposure is quite common, according to the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. The Center's research has shown that, in 98 magazines they studied, nearly a third of all alcohol advertising dollars spent in magazines went to magazines at least one of every four readers of which was a teenager. Similarly, a study of magazine alcohol ads from 1997–2001 showed that the number of alcohol ads increased with the number of adolescent readers of the magazine. For each additional million teenage readers (ages 12–17) of a magazine, the number of beer ads was 1.6 times higher, and the number of distilled liquor ads was 1.3 times higher. Exposure to alcohol advertising does have an effect, according to much of the research on the subject. Teen girls who are exposed to more alcohol ads and who pay more attention to those ads are more likely to report drinking or intending to drink alcoholic beverages.

Similarly, although the tobacco industry does not advertise in magazines targeted specifically to teenagers, research indicates that tobacco advertising reaches a significant percentage of 12-to-17-year-olds through their reading of adult-targeted consumer magazines.

MATERIALISTIC ATTITUDES

One final area of concern about the effects of advertising in teen magazines revolves around how these ads may influence teens' attitudes toward materialism, rather than their adoption of specific unhealthy behaviors such as disordered eating, alcohol abuse, or smoking. Some researchers have suggested that being surrounded by a culture in which teens are encourage to buy more and more products, especially brand-name products, makes teens more self-conscious, more concerned about external appearances, and generally less satisfied and happy with their lives.

—Kim Walsh-Childers

See also Advertising, Body Image and; Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Eating Disorders

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AFRICAN AMERICANS, MEDIA EFFECTS ON

Today, African American children and adolescents, like their peers of other ethnic groups, are born into a world of mass media that is in a state of constant change and dynamic motion. Although television remains the ubiquitous medium for information and entertainment, the presence of the computer, online capabilities, video games, and other electronic and print marvels continue to compete for the time and attention of these developing children and youth. The present and emerging forms of media also bring with them content and features that can challenge many of the views, attitudes, and social values of the family and other traditional agents of socialization. Thus, researchers, parent groups, educators, and others interested in child growth and development issues need to continue to explore ways to better understand the new social and psychological effects of various types of media on these children and adolescents.

Researchers and groups interested in the psychosocial effects of mass media on African American children and adolescents face the special challenge of understanding them within the context of the longstanding paradoxical relationships between African Americans and media in the United States. The images, portrayals, and coverage of African American life and culture by some media of the past and present were molded years ago, when the country decided to develop what some historians have called the "peculiar institution" of slavery. Jannette L. Dates and William Barlow have suggested that the reemerging 20th-century mass media industries of film, radio, advertising, news, records, and, later, television grew out of those early periods and contained many images based on the prevailing 19th-century stereotypes. Paradoxically, however, it was the later forms of radio, television, newspapers, and other mass media that provided some of the pressure for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND MASS MEDIA

It is against this backdrop of past and present sociopolitical events in this country and the agenda-setting role the media have played in them that African American children and adolescents have had to manage the natural processes related to their physical and psychosocial development. These stages of development must also be experienced concurrently with becoming a part of a vibrant mass media culture. The Aspen Institute Forum noted that the dynamic nature of this mass media culture is represented by broadcast and cable television, radio, newspapers, books, magazines, recorded music, advertising, computers, video games, Internet services, World Wide Websites, direct broadcast satellite services, and other emerging forms of mass communication. The impact of this mass media culture on the lives of African American children and adolescents cannot be overemphasized, because with the press of a button or the turn of a knob, they offer a vast array of entertaining, informational, and accumulated cross-cultural experiences that provide positive and negative life lessons, challenge family-based values, and influence personal identity.

A number of these important and interrelated life lessons and values emerge when we look at the accumulated experiences acquired from the mass media by African American children. It is, however, the construct of ethnic identity that is frequently embedded and discussed in the literature. Ethnic identity is a complex construct, yet authorities generally refer to it as having components of self-identification as a member of a group, attitudes about oneself as a group member, and ethnic beliefs and attachments. Significantly, this concept of ethnic identity and the effects of the mass media on African American children and adolescents become more salient when one considers studies linking the roles of television and other media in creating cultural stereotypes with the shaping of some negative dimensions of self-esteem. For example, some reports estimate that there are as many as 2,000 Internet sites offering games and other content that preach racial hatred aimed at children. Conversely, television and other forms of print and electronic media have been found to be excellent tools for teaching positive cross-cultural beliefs and values related to pride in various ethnic groups as a part of the socialization process.

It is frequently within the components of the socialization process that African American children and adolescents are most likely to learn from family members, to realize through media images and content, or to simply have real-world social experiences that will communicate to them what it means to be a person of color in the United States. Charles L. White noted that this ethnic or racial awareness does not come all at once but falls into place gradually during middle childhood, preadolescence, and early adolescence. The types of reactions, positive or negative, that children have to the awareness of their racially based experiences are important to mass media effects studies. The reactions of the children and adolescents are important because of the need to know how they construct and process the psychosocial meanings from the media experiences.

EFFECTS OF MASS MEDIA

The bulk of the research literature suggests that, based on the levels of usage, African American children and adolescents are highly attracted to television and some related screen media. Television and other forms of media bring with them attractive child, teenage, and adult models. Psychologists and other specialists know from social cognitive theory that children and young people learn from attractive models and the formal features of sound, lighting, and camera angles as they use stored information or schemata that guide and help them to understand the media content. Both schema theory and its interrelationship to the construct of modeling become important in studying various forms of media and their roles in the lives of African American children and adolescents. Paul Eggen and Don Kauchak define a schema as a type of script that plays a role in guiding the behavior of an individual. Drawing further on their work, we can say that models are likely to be most influential on African American children and adolescents who perceive them as being similar to themselves, as competent, and as having high status, as so many people in the media are seen to be.

The types of behavioral understandings and relationships that African American children and adolescents will construct from the media will partly depend on a complicated set of personal and family conditions. Research developed by the Kaiser Family Foundation identified three conditions in the home environment that can play a role in the media behavior of children and their peers. These conditions are (1) the kinds of media in a household to which children have access; (2) the availability of a particular medium or multiple forms of media; and (3) the family's media norms—their general orientation toward media and the extent to which the family enforces rules such as those related to television viewing or surfing the Web. It is fair to argue that the conditions described in this research from the Kaiser Foundation would be consistent for the homes of African American children and adolescents. This assumption is supported by some other findings in this same study suggesting that African American children watch all screen media combined more than an hour longer per day than Hispanic children do, and more than two hours longer than white children.

In addition, findings from a number of researchers suggest that television and other media can have maximal effects on African American and other children if the information and values involve content that evokes an emotional set of responses; if the information and values are age appropriate for the viewers and linked to their needs and interests; and if family members, caregivers, and friends do not provide children with a set of guidelines and standards for judging media content. Some additional observations related to

African American children and adolescents are that they seem to prefer programs that feature black characters; they seem to rely on the media for information related to how to talk, dress, and related social behaviors; and that adolescents seem to be interested in the media to learn about careers and various types of work experiences. The preference by some of these children and adolescents for characters with similar racial characteristics can be driven, in part, by their emerging level of ethnic identity. Some of their other behaviors are also motivated by their natural desire to practice or imitate what they see and hear in various types of media, as well as their desire to follow behaviors most acceptable to the peer group.

It is clear that the effects of various types of media are influenced, to a large degree, by each person's psychosocial makeup, socioeconomic status, age, ethnic identity, and a variety of other factors. Researchers, educators, and others interested in growth and development issues will need to continue to employ rigorous multidisciplinary and cross-cultural models or paradigms to better understand the effects of mass media on African American children and adolescents, who live in an ever-changing multimedia world.

Gordon L. Berry

See also African Americans, Media Images of; African Americans, Media Use by; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Ethnicity/Race, Stereotyping Media Effects; Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Effects, Models of

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AFRICAN AMERICANS, MEDIA IMAGES OF

Today, television is the world's primary storyteller; it tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time. Children of the world are now born into homes in which, for the first time in human history, centralized commercial institutions, rather than parents, church, or school, tell most of the stories. Television shows and tells us about life—people, places, striving, power, and fate. It tells us who is good and who is bad, who wins and who loses, what works and what doesn't, and what it means to be a man or a women or a member of particular racial group. Moreover, knowledge about minority groups, for some people, is largely dependent on what they see on television. Images of African Americans on prime-time television shows are important to our understanding of the impact of media images on children and adolescents, given that young people, especially teenagers, do much of their viewing during these hours.

The way minority groups, including African Americans, are portrayed on television has been a consistent and important focus of research on television. Some of the early research was fueled by government funding. In the late 1960s, for example, the Kerner Commission, appointed by President Johnson to investigate racial disturbances in many U.S. cities, charged that these disturbances could be traced to the American mass media industry's failure to serve and adequately represent minority interests. The Kerner Commission found that the media seemed to encourage racial conflict by presenting African Americans in negative and limited ways; the commission suggested

that the industry and its regulating agencies give priority to improving coverage related to minority groups. In the mid-1970s, a study commissioned by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found that minorities continued to be both underrepresented and portrayed in stereotypical ways in network prime-time broadcast programs.

The research literature is filled with studies conducted during the 1970s and early 1980s examining minority images on television. Most studies found a high degree of consistency in television's demography. Many found that African Americans were generally portrayed in stereotypic roles and as less powerful and less important than whites. Some early studies found that African American characters appeared to be younger, funnier, and flashier than white characters and that these characters were poorer, jobless, or cast in jobs below the top echelons. Moreover, African American characters were rarely cast as "bad" or as villains; in fact, it seemed as though television writers went out of their way not to cast them in negative roles. Interestingly, the research also found that prime-time network series often included communication practices that do not facilitate close cooperation, intimate relationships, or deep friendships between African Americans and whites.

According to several studies of network prime-time programs conducted during the 1970s and 1980s, the percentage of African Americans on television had begun to reflect their proportion in the U.S. population. Similarly, Nancy Signorielli (1985), in an analysis of data from 22 annual samples of prime-time network dramatic programs collected between 1969 and 1988, found that African Americans and other minority characters made up less than 15% of all characters and about 10% to 12% of characters in major roles. Today, there is an even greater degree of parity. African Americans in the prime-time programs of the mid-1990s reached a level of representation in prime-time programming that accurately reflected their numbers in the U.S. population (about 12%, according to the 2000 Census). Moreover, by the early 2000s African Americans were overrepresented in relation to their numbers in the general U.S. population. In comparison with African American and white characters, those in other minority groups, particularly Hispanics and Latina/os, Asians, and Native Americans, are nearly invisible.

Minorities, especially African Americans, are not found in diversified roles on television. In the mid-1980s, African Americans appeared most often in situation comedies and in programs whose characters were mostly African American. These trends continued in the programming of the 1990s and 2000s. African Americans are often found in situation comedies, many of which feature African American characters only and are aired on the newer, smaller, and less popular (lower-rated) networks such as UPN. African Americans in prime time thus seem to have been granted parity with their numbers in the general U.S. population only because they are typically found in programs whose characters are all minorities. Interestingly, Nancy Signorielli, Ariana Horry, and Kristin Carlton (2004) found that the programs with all or mostly all minority characters make up less than 10% of the available programming in prime time but account for more than 40% of African American characters and are typically found on only one network, UPN.

On the other hand, in analyses of the samples of broadcast programs, other minority groups are not typically found in situation comedies and are more likely to be involved in violence. For example, Hispanics and Latina/os (usually Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans) were usually involved with gangs or barrios. Similarly, Dana Mastro and Bradley Greenberg (2000) found that 77% of Hispanic and Latina/o appearances were on crime programs. In the most recent studies, characters of other races and Hispanics are presented with more diversity than African Americans. They are not found primarily in situation comedies and are more likely than African American characters to be seen in action-adventure and drama programs. These two groups of characters are also not relegated to the mostly minority or all-minority programming and are typically found in the programs with racially mixed casts. Finally, they are more likely than African Americans to be found in programs broadcast on ABC, CBS, and NBC, rather than on UPN, which often features programs with African Americans.

White characters, on the other hand, have parity in relation to their numbers in the general U.S. population and are presented with more diversity. Although whites are also most likely to be cast in situation comedies, they are also found in action-adventure and drama programs. Yet, white characters are also somewhat isolated from characters of other races and ethnic groups. The large majority of white characters are found on programs with all-white or mostly white casts, and very few are found in programs whose casts represent different races. Moreover, the majority of

white characters are found on the "big three" networks—ABC, CBS, and NBC—and are rarely seen in programs broadcast on UPN.

Nancy Signorielli (2005), looking at prime-time programs broadcast between 1997 and 2005, also found considerable differences by sex. African American men are equally likely to be found in both the racially diverse and mostly minority programs, whereas African American women are almost twice as likely to be found in mostly minority programs compared to racially diverse programs. Similarly, white men and white women appear most frequently on the mostly white programs, followed by the all-white programs. Only about a fifth of the white men and white women are found in racially diverse programs, and they make only token appearances in the mostly minority programs. Consequently, on broadcast network television there is a high level of isolation by race, with African American women being particularly segregated.

The types and prestige of occupations found in network prime-time broadcast programs differ by both sex and level of character diversity in the programs. Women in the programs with mostly minority or all-white casts often do not have jobs, their jobs are not made known to viewers, or these characters are depicted as not working outside the home. This image is particularly telling for the African American women in the mostly minority programs, in which 6 out of 10 are not seen working outside the home.

Numerous analyses of occupations on television have shown that characters who are professionals or in law enforcement are overrepresented, but those in white-collar or blue-collar jobs are underrepresented. Interestingly, Nancy Signorielli (2005) found similar patterns in all programs except those populated mostly by minority characters. Among the men, those with jobs in the professions appear in all types of programs. Law enforcement jobs also are seen in the programs with mostly white characters and racially diverse characters but infrequently in the programs with all white and mostly minority characters. Among the women, on the other hand, those in the racially diverse programs, followed by those in the mostly white programs, are most likely to be professionals. The smallest proportion of women cast as professionals is found in the mostly minority and the all-white programs. Moreover, African American women in the mostly minority programs are the group least likely to be cast as professionals.

Occupational prestige also differentiates between African American and white characters. On television, relatively few jobs are categorized as nonprestigious, and most are either neutral in prestige or prestigious. Levels of occupational prestige, the racial makeup of the programs, and the sex of the characters are interrelated. Women, particularly African American women in the mostly minority programs, have the least diversity and prestige in terms of the jobs in which they are seen. Similarly, white women in the programs with all-white casts are the least diverse in terms of the types of jobs in which they are found. Men's occupations, on the other hand, are equally diverse no matter what type of program they are found in, except for the lack of law enforcement–related jobs in the mostly minority programs (which typically are situation comedies).

Overall, our knowledge of how African Americans are seen on television indicates that prime-time programs typically lack racial diversity. African American characters are typically found in the small group of programs whose characters all are African Americans, and African American women, particularly those in these programs, tend to have the least diversified types of jobs. Most of these programs are broadcast on UPN, a network that, although typically garnering lower ratings than the older networks, is a popular viewing choice of African Americans, particularly African American adolescents. Finally, although there is little information about how African Americans are presented on Black Entertainment Television (BET), a cable channel oriented toward African Americans, Jones (1990) found that younger African American cable subscribers often watched BET and were typically more satisfied with these programs compared to African American–oriented broadcast programming.

MINORITIES IN MUSIC VIDEOS AND THE MOVIES

Music videos are a genre particularly popular with children and adolescents. Videos, because they are so compressed, often rely upon stereotypes and cultural shortcuts. Early studies of music videos found that concept videos (those that tell a story) had primarily white and male characters and very often were gender stereotyped. Violence appeared frequently, and white males typically were the aggressors. Soul, hip hop, and rap music videos appear most often on BET, the venue

in which we find most black performers, male and female. Many of these images, however, are hypersexualized, with highly gender-stereotypical images of both men and women. These videos, particularly hip hop and rap, show more scenes with sex, alcohol, smoking, violence, guns, and profanity than rock videos and typically show black males exhibiting these behaviors. African American women usually appear in hip hop videos as dancers and models, but recently some women have appeared in these videos as the performers. At the same time, hip hop and rap videos are often criticized because of the negative image they present of African American women, particularly their sexuality. In addition, whereas the African American culture is more accepting of diverse body types, music videos, including hip hop and rap, are much more likely to show African American women with thin and sexy bodies. Finally, movies, like other media, have fewer minorities, who are often portrayed in traditional, stereotyped, and sometimes subservient roles. In addition, many films popular with teens often have scenes conveying a distorted sense of romance as well as scenes depicting explicit sexual behaviors. These films, on the other hand, rarely mention contraception or other risks of sexual intercourse.

—Nancy Signorielli

See also Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race and; Hip Hop, Masculinity in; Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in; Movies, Romantic Love in; Music Videos, Effects of

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AFRICAN AMERICANS, MEDIA USE BY

Over the past four decades, studies examining media use among individual ethnic groups have uncovered four prominent trends in media use by African Americans. African Americans consume more media than viewers of other ethnic backgrounds, have a more positive attitude toward media, and prefer media aimed at and featuring African Americans. There is also evidence that the degree of ethnic identification among African Americans affects their media usage.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION

One consistent finding is that African American children and adolescents consume more media than whites and than members of other ethnic minority groups, often averaging 1–2 hours more per day. In a 2005 national survey of more than 2,000 youth aged 8 to 18, Donald Roberts, Ulla Foehr, and Vickie Rideout found that black youth are substantially more likely to use screen media (TV, videos, and DVDs) on any given day and spend more daily time with screen media (5:53) than either Latina/o (4:37) or white (3:47) youth. These differences appeared overall and at each level of parental education and income. Indeed, the physical environments of the black respondents were saturated with electronic media, with black youth more likely than white youth to report having each of the following in their bedrooms: televisions, DVRs, cable or satellite, subscriptions to premium TV channels, and video game consoles. Others have found that, for a large segment of black children, media use is a

near constant. In a 2004 survey of middle school students conducted by Jane Brown and Carol Pardun, 39% of black students reported watching television "almost all of the time I'm not in school," as compared to 16% of white students.

These heavy usage rates apply across nearly all media genres except computers. For example, in a 1988 survey of children in grades 2, 4, and 7, Betsy Blosser found that, in comparison to whites, black children spent more time watching TV, listening to the radio, playing video games, going to the movies, and reading books. These patterns also start quite early. In a 2005 survey of 1,065 parents of children aged 6 months to 6 years, Sowmya Anand and Jon Krosnick found that black toddlers and preschoolers spent more time watching television and reading than their white counterparts.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MEDIA

A second consistent finding is that black children and adolescents appear to hold a more positive orientation to the media than do whites. Evidence indicates that African Americans hold more favorable attitudes toward TV and advertising than do whites, report higher levels of satisfaction with TV, and are more likely to report using TV for information and as a source of guidance and learning. For example, in his 1972 survey of black and white children and teens, Bradley Greenberg found that black students were more likely than white students to agree that TV taught them most of what they know about jobs and about how women and men solve problems, how husbands and wives interact, and how teenagers act. Evidence also suggests that black children attribute greater realism to TV portrayals, regardless of a character's race, than do children of other ethnic groups.

PREFERENCE FOR BLACK-ORIENTED MEDIA AND ARTISTS

A third consistent finding is that African Americans express strong preferences for black-oriented media and artists. Despite the small number of black comedies and dramas on television, black children watch them frequently, tend to judge black characters favorably, and often identify more strongly with the content and portrayals than they do with white-oriented content. Findings published by Osei Appiah in 2002 also indicate that black students are more attentive to black characters, perceive them more favorably and more similarly to self, and recall more information about them in comparison to white models. This preference for black-oriented media is also seen in music genre choices. Although rap/hip hop emerged as the most popular genres with all adolescents in the 2005 survey led by Donald Roberts, blacks were still significantly more likely than youth in other ethnic groups to listen to it. Approximately 81% of blacks, versus 60% of whites and 70% of Latina/os, reported listening to this genre. Furthermore, the top genres consumed by black youth were all heavily influenced by African American performers and culture: rhythm and blues/soul (33%), reggae (24%), and gospel (19%). Given these preferences, the high rates of media use among black youth are less surprising and often reflect their consumption of mainstream *and* black-oriented media.

Indeed, it has often been argued that black and white children inhabit somewhat different media worlds. Supporting this notion are the 2004 findings of Jane Brown and Carol Pardun, who investigated viewing choices among 2,942 black and white middle school students. Participants were asked to indicate which of 140 current programs they watched regularly. Findings indicated that black girls and boys showed a clear preference for programs featuring black characters. *Each* of the top 10 programs watched by the largest proportion of black teens in the sample featured predominantly black casts. At the same time, few whites (16% or less) watched any of the top shows favored by black teens.

IMPACT OF ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION

A fourth set of findings has focused on demographic correlates of black media use, highlighting the role of ethnic identification. Here, the expectation is that black youth who identify more strongly as such should engage in different media use patterns than black youth whose ethnic identities are less secure, positive, or salient. Most evidence supports these expectations, although some null findings have emerged. Across several studies, findings have indicated that, in comparison to those with a weaker ethnic identity, black college students and adults who identify more strongly as African American or with African American culture also identify more strongly with black actors in advertising, spend more time browsing and respond more favorably to black-oriented websites, and tend to be more critical of the media, in general. For example, in their interviews

with 300 black adults, Richard Allen and William Bielby (1979) reported that blacks with a high level of racial group identity watched less TV and were more critical of black sitcoms. However, in her 1980 research study of black high school students, Jannette Dates found *no* correlation between students' racial attitudes and their evaluations of black TV characters. Their racial attitudes were not consistently associated with their evaluations, perceived reality, or identification with popular black and white characters. The way in which ethnic identity is assessed and defined may play an important role in these divergent findings.

A second demographic factor found to influence black media use is education. Here, being a more educated adult or having a more educated head of household has been associated with lower levels of television viewing. For example, in their 1979 study, Richard Allen and William Bielby found that better-educated black adults watched TV less overall, tended to view both majority and black-oriented public affairs programs more often, and were more critical of black-oriented programming.

DOCUMENTED MEDIA EFFECTS

Many have speculated that, of all media audiences, black youth may be especially vulnerable to television's influence because of their higher levels of consumption, positive feelings toward the medium, and greater use of TV for learning about the world. Unfortunately, however, few studies investigating media influences have used black children and adolescents as participants. As a result, findings from past research give us only rudimentary knowledge of television's effects on black children and adolescents.

Self-Concept

One group of studies has examined whether high levels of exposure to mainstream media, in which blacks are underrepresented and often negatively stereotyped, will have adverse effects on young black viewers' self-conceptions. In one of the first studies testing this notion, Carolyn Stroman (1986) examined associations between weekly hours of television viewing and the self-concepts of 102 black third through sixth graders. Findings indicated that greater TV viewing was associated with a more *positive* self-concept among girls but had no connection for boys. Later, in a 1984 study, Steven McDermott and Bradley Greenberg examined associations between self-esteem, racial self-esteem, and black fourth and fifth graders' exposure to and connections with *black-oriented* programming. Here, more frequent viewing of black programs and holding more positive attitudes toward black characters were each associated with *higher* self-esteem. In more recent work, L. Monique Ward (2004) demonstrated that greater exposure to mainstream programming and stronger identification with white characters were each associated with *lower* self-esteem among black high school students, whereas stronger identification with popular black characters was associated with *higher* self-esteem. These effects were especially consistent among students with lower levels of religiosity. Together, these findings suggest that exposure to and connections to black-oriented media may be beneficial to black youth, whereas connections to white-oriented media are less consistent and may depend on the age of the participant. Indeed, it may be likely that the self-concepts of black adolescents are particularly vulnerable because this is a time of heavy identity exploration.

Women's Body Image

As with the literature on general self-esteem, it is typically expected that frequent media exposure will be associated with a negative body image among young black women, who typically do not match the Eurocentric beauty ideals dominating the media. However, recent evidence from both empirical studies and interview data suggest that this is not necessarily the case, indicating that black women often reject these ideals as culturally irrelevant and instead relate more readily to black images and models, often in a positive manner.

For example, in a 1995 experiment with African American college students, Jalmeen Makkar and Michael Strube reported that participants high in self-esteem and African self-consciousness rated themselves as *more* attractive after exposure to images of attractive white women. In a similar experiment, Cynthia Frisby (2004) found that black female college students exposed to images in popular magazines did *not* engage in social comparison with the idealized images of Caucasian females. Exposure to these models did not affect these women's mood or self-esteem. However, when black women were exposed to idealized images of *African American* models in a follow-up study, those who were initially lower in self-esteem were later less satisfied with their own bodies.

Similar effects of viewer–race and character–race have emerged in studies examining women's regular media use at home. In a survey study published in 2000, Renee Botta found that more frequent TV viewing was associated with increased bulimic symptomatology for white teenage girls but not for black girls. For both groups, however, the more the girls idealized TV images and the more often they compared themselves and their friends to those images, the stronger was their drive to be thin and the more dissatisfied they were with their bodies. Surveying female undergraduates, Deborah Schooler and colleagues (2004) found that, among black women, more frequent viewing in high school of TV programming with predominantly black casts was associated with less body dissatisfaction, a lower drive for thinness, fewer tendencies toward bulimia, and fewer negative thoughts about the body. Few effects came from their viewing of programs with predominantly white casts. Overall, the data indicate that many black female viewers reject white beauty ideals presented by the media and compare themselves favorably to and are perhaps inspired by images of black women. For those who do idealize the white ideals, negative self-evaluations emerge as expected.

Evidence that black women may reject mainstream beauty ideals can also be seen in qualitative interviews of black and white high school girls conducted by Lisa Duke (2000) and Melissa Milkie (1999). Emerging from this work are findings that black girls are largely uninterested in teen magazines' beauty images because they conflict with African American standards of attractiveness. Instead, black girls reported enjoying the magazines for what they saw as relatively generic content on topics like social issues and entertainment. They viewed much of the beauty content as irrelevant or unrealistic and as intended specifically for white girls. As a result, the black girls did not actively admire or seek to emulate the white models but instead focused on images of black performers, athletes, or leaders, however infrequently they were depicted in the media. It appears that being outside the dominant culture gives black girls more space to critique its beauty standards.

Beliefs About Gender, Sexuality, and Violence

Because research consistently links frequent media use with aggression and with greater acceptance of stereotypical attitudes about gender and sexuality, concern has been expressed about how these links might work among African Americans. Will heavy media use among black children and adolescents produce the same (or stronger) effects than those seen among white youth because black youth are heavier media consumers? Or will heavy media use create weaker associations among black youth because of the paucity of black characters and role models to emulate? The limited existing evidence supports the first notion, finding that black youth are just as susceptible as white youth to media effects on social attitudes and behavior.

First, data from two studies indicate that more frequent viewing of sexually oriented genres, such as soap operas and music videos, is associated with increased acceptance of stereotyped notions about sexual roles and relationships among black adolescents (Walsh-Childers & Brown, 1993; Ward, Hansbrough, & Walker, 2005). Second, experimental data confirm these findings. In a 1995 study conducted among inner-city black teens, James Johnson and colleagues reported that girls exposed to eight sexist, nonviolent rap videos were more accepting of teen dating violence than were girls without such exposure; boys' attitudes were not affected. Similarly, in their 2005 study L. Monique Ward and colleagues reported that middle-class black students exposed to four stereotypical music videos offered stronger endorsement of sexual stereotypes than did students exposed to neutral videos. Third, these links appear to affect viewers' actual preferences and behavior. In a 1978 study conducted by Shirley O'Bryant and Charles Corder-Bolz, exposure to images of women in nontraditional roles (e.g., pharmacist) increased young black girls' preferences for stereotypically masculine jobs. Looking at sexual behaviors, Gina Wingood and colleagues (2003) discovered that frequent viewing of music videos among black female adolescents was linked with a greater number of sexual partners and a greater likelihood of acquiring an STD one year later. Taken together, these findings suggest that, among black viewers, especially girls, frequent media exposure is associated with holding more stereotypical beliefs about the sexes and about sexual roles.

Although fewer in number, findings also extend to beliefs about violence and actual risk taking. In their 1993 survey of teen media habits and risk taking, Jonathan Klein and colleagues noted that, for black female teens, greater exposure to rap music predicted more risk taking. For black men, greater use of the

radio and of sports magazines predicted more risk taking, whereas greater exposure to TV news predicted less risk taking. In a 1995 experiment, James Johnson, Lee Jackson, and Leslie Gatto found that black adolescents exposed to violent rap music videos expressed greater acceptance of the use of violence and a greater likelihood of engaging in violence than did participants in the control condition.

Racial Attitudes

A final domain of normative beliefs likely to be shaped by media use are beliefs about race. In our highly segregated society, children's opportunities to interact with people of a different ethnic group are sometimes limited. For many, the most regular "contact" with children from other ethnic groups may come through the media. What does repeated exposure to media portrayals teach young black viewers about race in America? Surprisingly little published research has addressed this question, with most of the existing studies focusing on adults or on whites' beliefs about blacks. Testing the positive power of the media, Alexis Tan and Denise Kinner, in a 1982 experiment, examined whether exposing black 9-year-olds to media images of black and white children interacting well as friends would affect their desire for similar interactions. As expected, the black students who saw the 30-minute PBS film featuring such interactions expressed significantly more willingness to engage in friendly social interactions with white children than did participants in the control group. Showcasing the negative power of the media, James Johnson, Sophie Trawalter, and John Dovidio, in their 2000 experiment, found that listening to violent rap music influenced black and white college students' perceptions of other black people. Here, exposure to such music encouraged students' labeling of a hypothetical black target's behavior as being due to his "violent nature," but it had no such effect for the white target. Listening to violent rap music also affected their perceptions of the intelligence of the black target but not the white target. Finally, documenting the potential long-term effects of media exposure on blacks' racial attitudes, Paula Matabane (1988) found that higher levels of television viewing were related to greater belief in racial progress and integration. Surveying 161 black adults, she found that frequent television viewers were more inclined than infrequent viewers to believe that blacks fit in to society and are similar to whites and to overestimate the size of the black middle class. Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from these few published studies about the effects of entertainment media on the racial attitudes of African American youth, evidence emerging thus far suggests both a strong potential and a need for further research.

—L. Monique Ward and Khia A. Thomas

See also African Americans, Media Effects on; African Americans, Media Images of; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Ethnicity/Race, Stereotyping

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AGENDA CUTTING

Agenda cutting is the process by which deserving news topics are neglected. The phenomenon of agenda setting is well established and refers to processes by which topics get preferred attention in news provision. A natural corollary of this is that other topics will receive less attention than they may "deserve" (a topic or story can be said to deserve attention if it deeply affects the lives or interests of a substantial segment of the population or could do so). This process of agenda cutting differs from censorship, in which an administration or authority uses punitive sanctions to block coverage of matters that it desires or is required to keep from public knowledge or attention.

Agenda cutting can be found not only in print media but in the data elicited by Internet searches. For example, Bradley S. Greenberg of Michigan State University notes that a Google search on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, provides evidence for and even quantification of the phenomenon. He found that a Google search using the keyword "Sullivan's Island" brought up about 100 websites describing Sullivan's Island's vacation amenities, history involving Edgar Allan Poe, and a stirring fight against the British in 1776. But one has to enter a further search descriptor, "slavery," before it then becomes clear that Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, was the first stop for many Africans who were brought to the New World as slaves. Between 1700 and 1775, 49% of all enslaved blacks came to America through South Carolina. This part of Sullivan's Island's past warrants attention and could make it an important tourist destination for those interested in the history of slavery.

An article by Roy Greenslade (2004) in the *Guardian* newspaper described an example of agenda cutting in the British press. The article noted that, for many years, newspapers treated the topic of child abuse as taboo, barely reporting on cases unless the assaults were carried out by strangers. Editors thought abuse within the family was too rare to warrant coverage and that intimate details of such crimes should remain private. The author argues that, even in the 21st century, coverage of child abuse is erratic and often inaccurate.

Another part of the reason the agenda is narrowed lies in our own preferences and behavior as viewers and readers. Teenagers more often watch music and entertainment on television, rather than news. Viewers who create the swelling market for systematically misnamed "reality programs" prefer to engage with

human relations trivia rather than with problems of profound substance and impact on society. They may correctly identify the reported romances of movie and music stars, while remaining (relatively) unaware of the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court or the location of Guantanamo and the controversies concerning suspected terrorists held there by the United States. Thus, viewer preferences can provide commercialized mass message systems with a rationale for agenda cutting and for a focus on entertainment instead of news and investigative reports.

—J. Mallory Wober

See also Agenda Setting; News, Children's Exposure to

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AGENDA SETTING

At the very core of the still-emerging discipline of media studies lies the concept of agenda setting. Developed some 50 years after Walter Lippmann wrote of press-mediated "pictures in our heads" in his seminal *Public Opinion,* the agenda-setting concept identifies a high correlation between the priority that media-makers assign to specific issues and the importance that their audiences place on those same issues. According to agenda-setting theory, the media might not tell us what to think about such an issue as abortion rights, for example, but they do influence our becoming aware of the issue, assigning it a high degree of importance, and eventually forming an opinion on it.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Within the tradition of media effects research, agenda setting is arguably a middle-of-the-road theory in terms of the kind of media influence it describes. It does not argue that audience attitudes and behaviors are largely unaffected by the media, as did the *limited effects theories* of the 1950s. Neither does it seek to minimize the existence of individual agency in the media consumption process (like the *magic bullet theory* of the 1940s and the more sophisticated *powerful effects theories* of the 1990s). The agenda-setting concept draws on an understanding of media-makers (particularly journalists) as *gatekeepers* of information, whose priorities and decisions shape (and limit) the issue coverage that is available to the public. The agenda-setting theory takes the gatekeeping concept one step further by formulating a connection between news items that are allowed through the gate onto TV screens and into newspapers and the issues audiences hold to be of importance to their own lives.

PAST AND FUTURE RESEARCH AVENUES

The first study that investigated that effect (and the first one to use the term *agenda setting*) was published in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. One hundred undecided voters in North Carolina were surveyed with respect to the issues that most concerned them in an upcoming election. In addition, the authors undertook a content analysis of local media. The results pointed to a high correlation between the issues that had been heavily covered in the news and the issues that the surveyed subjects indicated as playing an important part in their voting decisions. Since 1972, more than 250 studies have addressed the agenda-setting function of the media in dozens of countries around the world. Most of these investigations, however, have followed McCombs and Shaw's precedent in focusing on the correlations between issue prioritizing by the media and issue prioritizing by adult audiences, in the context of public (often election-related) affairs. The agenda-setting paradigm still holds promise for researchers studying media effects on children and teenagers as well as on adult perceptions and attitudes outside the political realm.

—Razvan Sibii

See also Cultivation Theory; Media Effects; Media Effects, History of Research on; Research Methods, Content Analyses; Research Methods, Questionnaires and Surveys

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AGGRESSION, ADVERTISING AND

Although the presence of aggression in television programming has been thoroughly investigated, aggression in television commercials has received considerably less attention from researchers. However, the study of aggression in television commercial content (especially commercials frequently viewed by children and adolescents) is indeed important, given that approximately 15% to 20% of all television content is devoted to commercials, with the average viewer exposed to approximately 60,000 commercials per year. The fact that children and young people are likely to be exposed to such a vast number of advertisements during their lifetimes makes the presence of aggression in television commercials a fertile area of research. This entry examines research on commercials during children's programming and during televised sporting events.

COMMERCIALS DURING CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

The few studies examining aggression in commercial content are typically confined to children's programming and sports programming. To date, only one published study, by Brendan Maguire and colleagues (2000), has examined aggression in commercials during general audience programming, finding 3% of the sample to feature aggressive portrayals. Interestingly, the studies investigating children's commercials indicate a higher percentage of violent portrayals than in commercials aired during other kinds of programming. In fact, in one of the most recent studies to examine this topic, Mary Larson found that of 37% of children's television commercials feature at least one act of physical, verbal, or object aggression.

While we know that aggression is somewhat prevalent in children's commercials, when and in what form is aggression most likely to appear? Research indicates that, when aggression is featured, it tends to be in commercials that target a young male demographic and feature male characters only. Aggression is found slightly less often when commercials feature both male and female characters. However, when commercials feature only female characters and are targeted to a female child audience, aggression is virtually nonexistent. Of all the commercials targeting children, aggression appears to be linked most to toy products, food products, and promos for upcoming television programs or movies.

The most recent research indicates that fortuitous aggression (i.e., accidental harm or acts of nature resulting in destruction) is the most frequent form of aggression shown in children's commercials, followed by object aggression (e.g., a character punching the wall) and physical aggression (e.g., a character punching or hitting another character), with verbal aggression (e.g., yelling, making sarcastic remarks, etc.) being least common. Larson concluded that these findings are of particular concern because of the fairly substantial presence of violence during children's television commercials, coupled with the fact that commercials featuring child characters offer young viewers many models of aggressive behavior.

COMMERCIALS DURING SPORTING EVENTS

Beyond the advertisements aired during children's television, researchers have also analyzed the content of commercials aired during televised sporting events, given that televised sports (considered "family-friendly programming") are often viewed by children. To assess the presence of aggression in sporting-event advertising, Charles Anderson (1997) studied commercials aired during the major league baseball playoffs of 1996, discovering that 7% featured at least one violent act and 6% had at least one violent threat. When Anderson (2000) repeated his study to examine the 1998 major league playoffs, he found that the rates of violent acts and threats had increased slightly. Most

recently, research on commercials aired during the highest-rated sporting programs suggests a lower level of aggression but a somewhat higher level of "unsafe behaviors" depicted in 14% of all commercials. Interestingly, commercials for television programs and movie promos accounted for 86% of all violent commercials aired during televised sporting events. Scholars also note that it is counterintuitive to find such commercials in family-oriented programming, and that it is challenging for parents to avoid exposing their children to aggression and unsafe behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Many important conclusions can be drawn from this body of literature. Indeed, the presence of violence and aggression in television commercials varies, ranging from 3% in general audience commercials to as much as 37% in children's commercials. However, it is noteworthy that the level of aggression found in children's commercials is significantly less than that found in children's programming, a genre in which 66% of all programs feature violence, according to the National Television Violence Study. Although this is an important comparison to note, children's exposure to aggressive commercials (much like their exposure to aggressive programming content) is cause for concern. Many consider children to be more vulnerable than adults to portrayals of television violence. In fact, research has suggested that children's exposure to violent images can lead to fear, aggression, and desensitization. Thus, commercials featuring aggression contribute to children's overall consumption of violent content, which can play a role in viewers' aggressive thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Furthermore, under the present ratings system, parents wanting to shield children from televised violence can make informed choices about television programming, but the same cannot be said for television commercials (as there is no ratings system in place to warn parents about the content of commercials). Ad-skipping technology, heightened parental supervision of television viewing by children, and more responsible content production by advertisers are among the efforts that could help to ensure that the viewing of programs and commercials is a safe experience for children.

—Angela Paradise

See also Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Exposure to; Advertising on Children's Programs; Aggression, Television and; Violence, Effects of

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AGGRESSION, ELECTRONIC GAMES AND

The emergence of new entertainment media has been followed time and again by concern about their potential harmful effects on children and other members of the public. This occurred with the advent of the penny press, dime novels, comic books, film, radio, and television. All have been denounced by social critics and

some scholars for the violent content they present and the antisocial consequences alleged to result from their use. In tandem with this, following every allegation, supporters of each new medium have dismissed critics and claimed that evidence failed to support claims of antisocial influence. These same concerns and allegations have been aimed at electronic games. Foremost among these concerns are questions about aggression in response to electronic game violence. Evidence suggests that playing violent electronic games can produce responses linked to aggressive behavior in children and adolescents; however, careful interpretation of this evidence is needed, and many questions remain unanswered. Still, given the wide exposure of children and adolescents to these games, an important challenge for parents is to monitor the content of the games played by their children and to teach the children to make sense of it.

In media effects research, definitions of aggression refer mainly to behaviors that are intended to cause harm to another person. Since the 1980s, research has focused on the violent content of electronic games and patterns of game use. Studies have also investigated the theoretical mechanisms linking electronic game violence to aggression, as well as the factors that might moderate this association. Much of this research has been based on theory associated with exposure to violent television. There is general agreement among researchers that exposure to television violence has a discernable influence on aggression. Some consider this influence to be small, whereas others regard it as more substantial. In either case, most experts agree that the unique attributes of electronic games make the experience and the effect of playing electronic games distinct from watching television.

THEORY AND RESEARCH

Literature developed across several disciplines explains the origins of human aggression and its association with media violence. Recent theory explains the enduring effects of media violence as originating in part from observational learning and desensitization, whereas short-term effects may be based on arousal and activation processes. An overview of factors that link aggression with media violence and electronic games in particular is provided by the general aggression model. This model describes how characteristics of a person and the environment interact to influence aggression, which is seen as an outcome governed largely by the learning and the activation of related knowledge structures, or thoughts that are brought to mind.

Short-term influence is said to result from personal variables (such as aggressive personality and situational variables (such as provocation or exposure to violent media) that activate thoughts related to aggression. The activated thoughts can bias automatic appraisal and response processes that govern both immediate and delayed aggressive behavior. For instance, a violent electronic game may promote aggression by increasing arousal or by priming hostile thoughts and affect. The account of long-term effects incorporates learning mechanisms to show how short-term experiences promote lasting change in the personal and situational variables that regulate aggression. Beginning at infancy, children learn how to interpret and respond to events through repeated rehearsal and reinforcement. Each short-term experience with violent media provides another learning trial that may influence the enduring composition of aggression-related knowledge structures and subsequent real-life aggression.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Many studies provide empirical evidence related to issues of how state-of-the-art violent electronic games might influence aggression. Meta-analyses of empirical findings from more than 30 studies testing the relationship between video game violence and aggression show a significant average effect size for hostile cognitions, hostile affect, and aggressive behaviors. These effects remain the same for males and females, children and adults. In one meta-analytic review by John Sherry (2001) at Michigan State University, findings revealed a trend showing greater effect sizes for more recent studies—a fact consistent with claims that newer games are more potent along dimensions that influence aggression.

Violent electronic games may be particularly influential because of some unique attributes, including the games' ability to provide children with a first-person point of view, an active role in decisions to aggress, and a compelling reward structure. Some games provide a first-person point of view that may help a child identify with the aggressor, a factor known to increase short-term aggression following exposure to television. Over the long term, games give children an active role in decisions to aggress, something that may help develop more complete aggressive knowledge structures than passive television viewing. Added to

this, many games have a reward structure that may induce repeated decisions to aggress, something that should advance the learning and availability of these aggressive knowledge structures. Still, questions remain concerning the precise nature of these knowledge structures and the strength and influence that electronic games exert. Some researchers argue that electronic games should have a stronger influence on aggression than other media because of their interactive nature. However, Sherry points to meta-analysis on aggression showing that the effect size for playing violent electronic games is small compared to that for watching violent television. The factors controlling this are not completely clear.

MEDIATORS AND MODERATORS

We know from numerous studies of TV that not all violence is the same. The way violence is portrayed and the way viewers interpret it are important moderators of aggressive effects. Meta-analysis of research on TV violence and aggression reveals that the largest effects on aggression come from portrayals in which sympathetic, appealing characters commit violence that is rewarded, justified, and realistic. Violence by unappealing characters that is unrewarded and unjustified reduces the influence of the exposure. The same content features in electronic games should be expected to moderate the influence of violent games on aggression. However, beyond these game content features, attributes of the child are also expected to moderate the influence of game play. Differences in the child's developmental stage, personality traits, and interpretations of the game should moderate the influence of violent content on aggression.

Evidence suggests that personality factors play an important role in the selection of and reaction to electronic games, but the findings are varied and as yet provide no solid foundation for clear predictions about how personality moderates the association between aggression and electronic games. In a similar manner, media scholars have argued for decades that the manner in which individuals interpret media experience is a critical determinant of media content's influence, but there is little research yet examining individual interpretations of electronic game violence. Two areas that have received more attention are age and sex and their association with the outcome of game play. We know, for example, that males spend more time playing electronic games than females and that they prefer more violent games, but to date there is no evidence that violent games influence aggression more in males than in females. Similarly, we know that young children begin to spend more time playing games as they age and that their preference for violent games increases also. It should come as no surprise that children begin to prefer violent games as they mature. We know from research on television that, as children age, they become less frightened by fictional danger and violence such as that found in electronic games, but we do not know how this relates to the influence of violent games on aggression.

EXPOSURE TO VIOLENT CONTENT IN ELECTRONIC GAMES

The evolution of electronic games has been accompanied by considerable change in the amount of violence contained in games as well as the type of violence and the context within which it is portrayed. The crude forms of fighting and killing by cartoonlike characters or the unrealistic starship gunfights in early games are quite mild when compared to the levels and forms of sophisticated violence in newer games. Information about the presence of violence is included in assessments from the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), an industry source for ratings on the age-appropriateness of electronic games. ESRB rates games as *EC* (Early Childhood), *E* (Everyone), *E10+* (Everyone 10 and older), *T* (Teen), *M* (Mature), *AO* (Adults Only), and *RP* (Rating Pending), with distinctions for different levels of violence beginning at *E*. Academic study provides more detailed knowledge of this violence through content analysis.

Although estimates by academic researchers vary somewhat, studies of the most popular electronic games indicate that violence and physical aggression are contained in more than 70% of these games. Not surprisingly, the amount of violence varies by game genre and rating, with violence appearing in essentially all role-playing games and in more than 85% of all strategy and action games. In terms of game ratings, violence is present in most games aimed at young audiences (e.g., games rated *E*), but the actual amount of violence contained in electronic games is difficult to specify. Violence encountered during use varies according to how each person plays the game. However, research has estimated that games rated

E contained more than one violent interaction per minute on average, whereas games rated *T* and *M* contained more than four. In terms of violent context, research mirroring protocols from the *National Television Violence Study* has shown that patterns of aggression in electronic games primarily depict human characters using weapons to perpetrate violence that results in the bloodshed of victims. Further, violence is represented predominantly as justified, usually rewarded, and almost never punished. This violence can be quite graphic in *M*-rated games such as *Manhunt,* where vividly represented beatings and stabbings cause blood to spurt in all directions. Many *T*-rated games as well contain content fitting the ESRB descriptor categories of "blood and gore" and "intense violence."

The context and extreme levels of violence in games rated *M* would be inconsequential for children and adolescents if these games were played only by adults, but this is not the case. Research shows that games are played by more than 90% of American children and that violent games are among the most popular entertainment products for teens and adolescents, especially boys. Preteen and teenage boys report that they have no trouble buying games rated *M* and that their parents do not check the ratings of games that they play. Estimates of time spent playing electronic games vary by age, with children from ages 2 to 7 spending less than 5 hours a week and older children playing 7 hours or more. At more than four violent interactions per minute, those playing *T*- or *M*-rated games will be exposed to hundreds of violent interactions each week.

THE APPEAL OF VIOLENT ELECTRONIC GAMES

The attraction of adolescent males to violent content is well established in research on other media, and although research on electronic games is sparse, the same appears true here. A longitudinal study on third- and fourth-grade German children showed that violent games became more attractive for both boys and girls as they got older, although they were not a popular pastime overall at that age, particularly among girls. Research in the United States shows that, by the seventh and eighth grades, games with violent themes were played by more than half of all children observed. Survey research reports that adolescents play mostly for the sake of enjoyment, and although reports consistently show that gamers enjoy playing, little research shows exactly why.

We do know from research that aggressively disposed adolescents prefer electronic games with violent content and that they play for longer periods of time. A survey of American students in the eighth and ninth grades found that adolescents who were more likely to get into arguments with teachers and fights at school spent more time playing violent games. Similar patterns occur in the German sample of third- and fourth-grade children, which showed that children rated as more aggressive by their teachers and peers spent more time playing electronic games.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the evidence that playing violent electronic games influences aggressive behavior in children and adolescents, the amount and diversity of research in this area justify a careful causal interpretation of the relation between violent electronic games and correlates of aggression, particularly in terms of short-term response. Questions remain about the magnitude and nature of this effect. Cautious reviewers rightfully point to the fact that the limited research in this area cannot answer important questions about the range of outcomes that are influenced by violent games or the magnitude of their influence. We do not know enough about the features of different game content or about characteristics of children that increase and decrease their vulnerability to game influence. Most notably, research using the type of controlled experiments and longitudinal designs needed to tell about long-term effects on children and adolescents is lacking. Yet, this is changing.

The National Science Foundation has begun to fund long-term studies on this topic at institutions such as Michigan State University and the University of Michigan. In addition, experimental research examining the neurobiology of aggression and violence offers promise. Research by René Weber (2006) at Michigan State University and his colleagues using modern brain imaging technology shows that electronic game violence evokes brain activity patterns similar to those found with actual aggressive behavior. Comparable research specifically on adolescents reports similar findings with exposure to violent television. Notably, research by Vincent Mathews at Indiana University and his colleagues indicates that this type of brain

activity following exposure to highly violent media is the same in normal adolescents as in those diagnosed with aggressive, disruptive behavior disorders.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS

Actions by policy makers can limit possible harm to children and adolescents by developing a universal rating system that eliminates confusion for parents and by passing legislation that restricts minors from gaining access to violent electronic games without parental permission. At the same time, the active involvement of parents in the selection and monitoring of games played by their children has the strongest potential for benefit. Experts in this area recommend that parents become wiser consumers who avoid the purchase of potentially harmful electronic games, restrict their children's access to violent games, and limit the time spent playing video games overall. Just as important is the need for parents to communicate with children and explain why violent games are harmful. Children should be made aware of the lessons that are taught by games where characters often try to harm each other, where harm is rewarded or portrayed as humorous, and where violence is always shown as the best way to overcome obstacles and solve problems. A child who becomes a wise consumer will make better decisions when parental guidance is absent.

—Ron Tamborini and René Weber

See also Electronic Games, Cognitive Effects of; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; General Aggression Model (GAM); Violence, Effects of; Violence, Meta-Analyses of

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AGGRESSION, MOVIES AND

With the advent of mass media, children's exposure to violent images has become a widespread public concern. This entry focuses on the effects of movies on aggression in children and youth, which have been examined through both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research provides evidence of a correlation between movie violence and aggression, while qualitative researchers have attempted to understand the varied ways in which children and adolescents experience such violence. Both quantitative and qualitative researchers agree that aggressive behavior is not likely to result from a single cause. Parental influence, family environment, mental health, and the influence of peers are all important influences. Movie violence is thus one of many potential factors contributing to aggressive behavior in children and youth.

ISSUES IN RESEARCH ON MOVIE VIOLENCE

From the 1920s to the present, hundreds of studies have been conducted to determine whether movie violence causes aggression in viewers. However, it must be noted that many studies conflate movie and television effects, with the findings generalized to both forms of media. Although there are many similarities between the two, there are also some differences. Violence in movies is often presented more realistically, more graphically, and in larger-than-life images, thus heightening the intensity of the viewing experience. In addition, viewers watch movies more attentively in comparison to television, which is watched in the home environment and therefore one may be distracted and watch with less involvement. However, due to the accessibility of television, viewers are exposed to more violence in TV programs than on film. Further complicating the issue is the fact that movies can also be watched at home on the TV screen. However, despite some differences, concerns about the violent content of movies and TV are generally the

same. One of the persistent questions has been whether exposure to these violent images causes aggression in children and youth.

At least two primary areas of contention exist among researchers who investigate this topic. The first is the problem of defining and operationalizing the terms *violence* and *aggression. Violence* is generally defined as an extreme form of aggression involving intention and harm and resulting in acts such as aggravated assault or murder. However, it can be depicted in animated films, dramas, comedies, horror movies, action movies, science fiction, war stories, and documentaries. Because violence can be presented in widely varying forms, generalization about effects becomes problematic. Studies have demonstrated that violence portrayed humorously, for instance, may be interpreted differently from violence presented realistically. Other contextual factors have also been shown to affect interpretation and impact, including identification with the perpetrator or victim, motives for violence, consequences of violence, and the nature, duration, and graphic nature of the violence.

Aggression is typically defined as behavior directed toward another with the intent to harm. Studies of aggression often include verbal as well as physical acts. A key area of disagreement among media researchers is whether aggressive play, often known as rough-and-tumble play, should be grouped together with other forms of aggressive behaviors (pushing, hitting, shoving). Many researchers have included rough play in their measurements of overall aggression in children. However, this has been disputed, as there is no intent to harm. Such play demonstrates excitement and arousal but not necessarily aggression.

The second major area of contention in the research on movie violence pertains to the methods of investigation. The literature on media effects has emerged from two divergent traditions of inquiry. The first tradition is that of quantitative research based on experimentation, statistical analysis, and generalization from one sample population to another. Qualitative research represents the interpretive tradition of inquiry, focusing on smaller populations and emphasizing in-depth observation and interviews in natural settings, thick description, and a belief in the social construction of meaning. Researchers in these two traditions ask and answer different types of questions and explicate different aspects of the area of investigation.

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The vast body of research on media effects has been produced by randomized experiments most often conducted in a laboratory setting and less frequently in a field setting. Statistical proof for effects is sought by isolating key factors and controlling for the influence of others. Early laboratory research focused on direct cause and effect; however, more recent studies have attempted to identify intervening variables that might impact the effect being studied. The most common research design has been to randomly assign participants to view either a violent or a nonviolent film clip and then to place them in a situation where they have the opportunity to demonstrate aggression. Children are typically placed in a play setting and observed for aggressive behaviors. In field studies, they are shown movies in their classrooms or residences, with observation of their behaviors following the viewing. Findings indicate that viewers who watched the violent movie clips tended to exhibit higher levels of short-term aggression. Meta-analyses have found larger effects in laboratory experiments than in field studies. There is also evidence that effects are stronger in children predisposed to aggressive behavior.

Although results have not always been consistent, the number of studies with significant positive findings indicates a causal link between movie violence and short-term aggressive behavior for some children. Suggested explanatory factors include increased physiological arousal and excitation, the triggering of preexisting aggressive thoughts, and the tendency to identify with aggressive characters and imitate their behaviors.

Critiques of these studies pertain to the definitions of aggression and the constraints of the laboratory environment. As noted above, playful aggression is not often distinguished from behavior with intent to harm. Also, the proxies for aggression used in the laboratory settings (popping balloons, giving noise blasts, punching Bobo dolls—inflatable, egg-shaped balloon creatures with weights in the bottom that makes them bob back up when knocked down) are different from real acts of aggression. These experiments do not inform us about long-term effects or tell us whether the same effects would occur in a real-world setting. Lastly, experimenter demand may come into play when subjects behave in certain ways due to their perceptions of researcher expectations.

Surveys have also contributed to the literature on viewing habits and aggressive behavior. TV and

movie viewing are often considered together in assessing the amount and content of media violence viewed. This information has usually been gathered through child self-reports or provided by parents. Correlations between the amount of media violence viewed and levels of aggressive behavior are in the small-to-moderate range and are higher for younger children than for teenagers. However, establishing an association between the two factors does not demonstrate that media violence causes the aggressive behavior. For example, children predisposed to aggression may be more likely to watch movies containing violence. Other factors may also be involved; for instance, alienation from peers has been shown to be predictive of violent film viewing and could also be related to aggressive behavior. The longitudinal research investigating viewing habits and aggression has primarily focused on television and is not discussed here, except to note that, according to the surgeon general's 2001 report on youth violence, the best predictor of future aggressive or violent behavior is past history of aggression and violence.

In summary, survey research provides evidence of a correlation between media violence and aggression. Randomized laboratory and field studies indicate that the former may cause short-term aggressive behavior in some individuals. However, researchers agree that the effects account for only a small part of the variance in aggressive behavior. Human aggression is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, and media messages do not operate in a sociocultural vacuum. Each of us brings a unique set of beliefs, values, traits, and social, cultural, and personal history to the viewing experience. The combination of these individual characteristics affects what we view and how we make sense of it. It is in this area that qualitative researchers contribute to our understanding of movie effects.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative researchers assert that violent media mean different things to different people. They have attempted to understand how children and youth think, talk about, and interpret violence in movies and television. Uses and gratifications research has focused on the way that individuals actively use the media for different purposes and pleasures. The violence contained in heroic tales or animated films, for instance, may fulfill a need in children for power and agency. Violent movies can also provide thrills and serve a social purpose in talking about the movie with peers. Research from cultural studies has further demonstrated that young viewers decode and interpret the dominant messages of the media in different ways, including acceptance, negotiation, and resistance. Thus, not all children will interpret movie violence in the same way nor be affected equally by it. Critiques of this body of research pertain to its interpretive nature, small study samples, lack of generalizability, influence of researcher expectations, and acceptance of children's responses at face value.

—Donna Grace

See also Aggression, Music and; Aggression, Music Videos and; Aggression, Television and; Media Effects; Movies, Violence in; Television Violence, Susceptibility to

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AGGRESSION, MUSIC AND

The content and messages of music lyrics is a controversy that started to gain public exposure and discussion around the 1960s, when music began to contain such themes as drug use, risky sexual behavior, and violence. In the early 1990s, this controversy surged again with the popularity of violent gangsta rap. Since then, there has been debate as to whether exposure to violent music lyrics can have a negative impact on youth.

It is no surprise that music plays a large role in the lives of American youth. Children and adolescents

spend hours listening to their favorite musical artists. Musicians are often idolized by youth, as evidenced by youth imitation of fashion styles, behaviors, and product selections. A 2004 study by Gentile, Lynch, Linder, and Walsh estimated that children spend 21 hours per week listening to music—comparable to the amount of time youth spend watching television. Moreover, this may be an underestimate because music is often played in the background while other activities are taking place (e.g., doing homework, talking with friends, playing video games). Inventions such as the iPod and MP3 stick make it possible for people to listen to music almost anywhere.

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ON VIOLENT MUSIC LYRICS

The current research literature on the effect of violent music lyrics is rather small compared to the research on violent television or even violent video games. In addition, the findings from the few studies that have been conducted are mixed. There is some evidence that exposure to violent music can increase aggressive cognitions, affect, and various attitudes concerning violence. One possible reason for such inconsistencies in the current literature is methodological problems in the current research.

Controlling for Music Tempo Differences

Music can be divided into two primary parts: music (tempo, volume, intensity, etc.) and lyrics. Each of these components of music has been analyzed separately and together. In 1984, McFarland examined whether exposure to different tempos of nonlyrical music (tension-inducing music, relaxing music, or no music) had an effect on undergraduate listeners completing the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). In the TAT, participants view ambiguous photos and then write a story that describes what is occurring in the photo. The TAT is used to measure emotions and personality characteristics. Participants who heard high-tension music wrote the most unpleasant stories, which could indicate more negative affect.

Although this study does not address the impact of lyrics on listeners, it does demonstrate that the tempo of music can have an impact on the listener. This finding is especially important to other music research, stressing that the type and tempo of the music must be controlled to examine the impact of lyrics on the listener.

Incomprehensible Lyrics

Another issue plaguing the current literature on music violence involves the ability of participants to comprehend the lyrics in the music stimuli. In rock and rap songs, it is often difficult for the listener to decipher what the singer is actually saying. For example, a study conducted by Wanamaker and Reznikoff (1989) exposed three groups of undergraduate participants to one of three conditions: (a) a song with violent music and violent lyrics, (b) a song with violent music and nonviolent lyrics, or (c) a song with nonviolent music and nonviolent lyrics. The results found no effect of violent music lyrics on hostility. However, only 23% of the subjects exposed to the violent song with violent lyrics correctly identified the main theme of the song.

Controlling Characteristics of Stimuli

Many media violence studies utilize only one stimulus per condition, and often those stimuli are not equated on various other characteristics (e.g., how exciting the stimulus is, etc.). For example, many studies have subjects listen to one specific violent song or one specific nonviolent song. Often, these songs are not equated on other characteristics. This omission can compromise the generalizability of the findings. If significant results were found, one must question whether these results are characteristics of all violent and nonviolent music or whether this finding was specific to the two music stimuli that were selected. Wells and Windschitl (1999) suggest sampling a range of stimuli from the population and using multiple stimuli to represent each condition. Also, stimuli should be controlled on various other characteristics so the researchers can be certain that the main manipulation is the amount of violence in the media.

Effect of Violent Lyrics on Aggression-Related Variables

Currently, only a small number of studies have investigated the relationship between exposure to violent lyrics and aggression-related variables.

In 2003, Anderson, Carnagey and Eubanks published five studies that experimentally examined whether exposure to violent lyrics compared to nonviolent lyrics can increase aggressive cognitions and aggressive affect. In all five studies, undergraduate participants listened to either a nonviolent or a violent song and then completed aggressive cognition and

affective measures. All five studies found the same results: Exposure to violent music lyrics increases aggressive cognitions and aggressive affect.

For example, in the third study, the researchers exposed participants to (a) one of four violent songs, (b) one of four nonviolent songs, or (c) no song. Afterwards, participants completed a measure of state hostility and aggressive cognition, in a counterbalanced order. Next, participants rated their perceived arousal by the song and how well they could comprehend the lyrics. Results showed no difference in arousal or lyric comprehension between the violent and nonviolent song conditions. Results did show that subjects exposed to a violent song had more aggressive cognition than those not exposed to a violent song. Also, among participants who completed the questionnaire immediately after hearing the song, those exposed to a violent song were more hostile than those exposed to a nonviolent song. Because the violent and nonviolent songs were equal on lyric comprehension and perceived arousal, it is more likely that the differences found on the hostility and aggressive cognition were due to the amount of violence in the song lyrics.

Other studies have found that violent lyrics had no impact on aggression-related variables. For example, Ballard and Coates (1995) conducted a study in which undergraduate participants heard one of six songs varying in genre (rap vs. heavy metal) and lyric (homicidal, suicidal, neutral). After listening to the randomly assigned song, participants completed various scales that included measures of suicidal thoughts, depression, state hostility, and self-esteem. Results showed no difference in state anger between the lyric content conditions. Participants, however, completed the state anger scale after completing numerous other scales. This delay in time and interference from other scales could account for part of this null finding.

A study conducted by Wester, Crown, Quatman, and Heesacker (1997) examined whether exposing male undergraduates to violent lyrics affected attitudes towards women. Participants were exposed to (a) sexually violent music with violent lyrics, (b) sexually violent music without lyrics, (c) sexually violent lyrics without music, or (d) no music or lyrics. Participants then completed various attitude scales. Results found no difference in negative attitudes toward women among any of the four groups. However, participants who were previously exposed to violent lyrics (regardless of whether music was present or not) rated their relationships with women as more adversarial.

In a study conducted by Barongan and Hall (1995), results suggested that antisocial lyrics affect behavior; however, it is unclear that the examined behavior was actually aggressive. In this study, undergraduate males first listened to misogynous or neutral rap music. Next, participants viewed three vignettes (neutral, sexual-violent, assaultive) and then selected one to be shown to a female confederate. Participants who were previously exposed to misogynous lyrics significantly more often selected the assaultive vignette to be shown to the confederate female. Currently, there is no research that clearly examines the causal effect of violent music lyrics on aggressive behavior.

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MUSIC PREFERENCE AND MALADAPTIVE BEHAVIORS

There is some evidence that music preferences are related to certain maladaptive behaviors. In 1994, Took and Weiss demonstrated that adolescents' preferences for rap and heavy metal music were correlated with numerous maladaptive behaviors related to both academic performance and other behaviors outside of the classroom. Rap and heavy metal music was negatively correlated with academic performance and positively related to school behavioral problems. Self-reported drug use, arrests, and sexual activity were also positively correlated with rap and heavy metal music preference.

A more recent study by Rubin, West, and Mitchell (2001) demonstrated that music preference was correlated with various negative attitudes. Undergraduate students whose favorite music was rap or heavy metal had more hostile attitudes than students who preferred other music types (e.g., adult contemporary, dance, country). Students who preferred heavy metal music displayed more negative attitudes towards women than other students who preferred different music genres. Rap music fans displayed higher distrust of others compared to other music genre fans.

In conclusion, music with violent lyrics appears to increase aggression-related thoughts and feelings, but the link between violent lyrics and aggressive behavior is less clear.

—Nicholas L. Carnagey and Brad J. Bushman

See also Aggression, Music and; Agression, Music Videos and; Music, Impact of Violence in; Music Listening, Problem Behavior and; Music Lyrics, Effects of

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AGGRESSION, MUSIC VIDEOS AND

Almost from the day of the launch of MTV (Music Television) on August 1, 1981, music videos have been accused of being excessively violent and of contributing to the culture of violence in the United States and around the world. Such allegations of social and psychological harm from watching violence in music videos are often based on fallacious assumptions or other informal or scientific fallacies, but some evidence of antisocial behaviors resulting from watching violence-laden music videos does exist.

VIOLENT CONTENT

Music television has evolved into several channels, the most popular of which are MTV, VH-1 (Video Hits 1), BET (Black Entertainment Television), and CMT (Country Music Television). Researchers have conducted several systematic content analyses to determine the level of violence portrayed on these music television networks. A 1997 study reported that between 11.5% and 22.4% of the videos shown on these music networks contained violent acts, and that 63% of the videos that were violent showed young people engaging in interpersonal violence. That same year, the American Academy of Pediatrics commissioned research evaluating 518 music videos. Approximately 15% of the videos contained interpersonal violence, with six violent acts on average per violent video. A 2002 study found that BET and MTV were more likely to feature violent videos than other music television networks, and 15% of all music videos contain at least one act of aggression. Summarizing across findings, it seems that roughly one out of every seven music videos aired on the major music television networks contains violent content.

A particularly detailed 1998 content analysis assessed characteristics of the perpetrators and victims of violence in music videos on the four major music television networks. In 391 videos in which gender of the aggressor and the victim could be determined, males were depicted as aggressors in 78.1% of the videos, and females perpetrated violence in 19.9% of the videos. The researchers indicated that gender of victims often was not as clearly identified as that of aggressors, but when coding of gender was possible, females were the victims 78.3% of the time. This finding suggests that, at best, music videos are perpetuating societal stereotypes; at worst, they are exacerbating them.

EXPOSURE

One of the periodic "criticisms" of music videos is that they are the provenance of young people, who are avid consumers of them. In other words, they are criticized because they are effectively marketed. Indeed, they are. A large-scale Annenberg Public Policy Center survey conducted in 1997 found that

53% of 10-to-17-year-olds watch MTV regularly. Another study found that 80% of 9th to 12th graders watch the channel, with an average viewing time of 2 hours per day. A third study reported that 73% of boys and 78% of girls between 12 and 19 years of age watch MTV, with an average of 6.4 hours per week viewing. Although the normative exposure data provided by these investigations differ rather substantially, it is obvious from all three sources that children and adolescents spend a great deal of time watching music videos. The argument is often made that such viewing displaces other, more productive activities. The argument that such regular and prolonged exposure to violence has antisocial effects is also common.

PUBLIC OPINION

Indeed, public opinion surveys reveal that caregivers and the general public believe that violence in music videos has deleterious personal and societal effects on consumers and should be more tightly restricted. A 2001 Gallup poll found that 38% of mothers surveyed thought that violence in music and other entertainment was an extremely important cause of school violence. Dovetailing with these findings, an earlier CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll found that 48% of Americans surveyed indicated that violence in popular music videos should be more tightly restricted and regulated. Moreover, politicians and other public figures frequently have claimed that viewing violent music videos leads adolescents to become antisocial, to engage in substance abuse, and to engage in Satanism, murder, suicide, sexual violence, and other acts of aggression.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTS

Given the prevalence of violent content in music videos, their heavy consumption by allegedly vulnerable children and adolescents, and widespread public opinion that viewing violent music videos causes harm, it should be no surprise that the social scientific community has investigated the social and psychological impact of viewing violent music videos. Three late-20th-century investigations found that aggressive behaviors among adolescents decreased when music television networks were removed from the television viewing diets. Another study found that increased viewing of violent music videos was positively associated with increased acceptance of teen dating violence. A widely cited 2003 study reported a positive correlation between viewing MTV and physical fights among third- and fifth-grade children. More specifically, children who viewed high levels of MTV were rated by their peers as more hostile and relationally physically aggressive—and the children's teacher rated the heavy MTV viewers as more relationally aggressive, physically aggressive, and less helpful—than their peers who viewed less MTV.

A PERCEIVED DEADLY COMBINATION

Social critics have regularly lambasted the harmful social consequences of consuming rock music, which they have perceived to powerfully engage the emotions of vulnerable youth. Others have decried the antisocial potency of television. As might be imagined, the combination of these two allegedly powerful antisocial forces has often been perceived to be particularly deadly. Extant empirical evidence does not effectively refute such claims, although the robustness of the antisocial effects found has not been particularly high.

Undoubtedly, in fact, the etiology of violence is complex and multifactorial. Public concern about violence in music videos is often discussed against a backdrop of perceptions of increased interpersonal violence and increased violent crimes. In reality, when weighed against the prevailing normative data, such perceptions of escalating societal violence are erroneous. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, violent crime in the United States peaked in the mid-1990s and has been steadily decreasing ever since. But in the public psyche, perceptions are more real than evidence. And the heavy exposure by children and adolescents to music videos with violent content undoubtedly will keep the issue of the effects of violent music videos in the public mind long after empirical evidence has clarified the issue to the satisfaction of the scientific community.

—Andrea Holt and Jennings Bryant

See also Aggression, Movies and; Aggression, Music and; Aggression, Television and; Music, Impact of Violence in; Music Videos, Amount of Viewing; Music Videos, Effects of; Television Violence

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AGGRESSION, TELEVISION AND

Since its introduction to American society at the 1939 World's Fair, television has become an integral part of nearly every home. Since 1985, about 98% of all households in the United States have owned at least one television set. It is estimated that there are more television sets in the United States today than there are toilets. TV ownership is also very high in most other industrial countries and even in many third world countries. There are not only more TV sets today than ever before, they are also on longer—more than 7 hours per day in most American homes. A large share of television programming contains violence, and researchers have found that TV violence increases aggression in both the short run and the long run. The effect is found among both children and adults.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TV PROGRAMS

Part of the National Television Violence Study in 1996, 1997, and 1998 included a comprehensive content analysis of more than 8,000 hours of television programming. Violence on television was defined as "any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical force or the actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings." The analysis revealed that about 60% of programs contained violence. Fewer than 4% of the violent programs contained an antiviolence theme. Violence portrayed on television is often glamorized, sanitized, or trivialized. Nearly 40% of the perpetrators of violence were "good" characters. Even when the perpetrators of violence were "bad" characters, more than 40% went unpunished. Almost 75% of the perpetrators of violence showed no remorse for their actions. More than half the victims of violence showed no pain or suffering. Only 15% of the violent programs portrayed the long-term consequences of the violence for the victim's family, friends, and community. Even though more than half the violent scenes on television were lethal, more than 40% of them were portrayed as humorous.

EFFECTS OF TELEVISED VIOLENCE ON AGGRESSION

For more than 50 years, social scientists have investigated the effects of televised violence on aggression and violence. *Aggression* is typically defined as any behavior intended to harm another person. *Violence* is typically defined as a severe act of physical aggression, such as an assault. Thus, all violent acts are aggressive acts, but not all aggressive acts are violent.

Short-Term Effects

Experiments provide the best test of the short-term effects of TV violence on human aggression. Some experiments are conducted in a laboratory, and some experiments are conducted in a more natural setting (called a *field experiment*). In a typical laboratory experiment, participants are randomly assigned (by the flip of a coin) to watch a violent or a nonviolent TV show. Because participants are randomly assigned to groups, the same number of aggressive people who watch violent shows should watch nonviolent shows. The researcher treats the two groups the same, except for the show they watch. After the participants watch the show, the researcher measures how aggressively they behave. In laboratory experiments involving children, the aggressive behaviors tend to be somewhat mild (e.g., pushing and shoving another child). In field experiments with children, the aggressive behaviors tend to be stronger (e.g., fighting in hockey games). In laboratory experiments involving adults, participants often punish another person (actually an accomplice of the researcher) using electric shocks or loud blasts of noise delivered through headphones.

The consistent finding is that participants who watch violent TV shows behave more aggressively immediately afterward than do those who watch nonviolent TV shows. The effect of TV violence on aggression occurs regardless of gender, race, income, intelligence, or chronic aggressive tendency. Because these are experimental studies, we can conclude that exposing viewers to TV violence *causes* them to behave more aggressively in the short run.

Long-Term Effects

Longitudinal field studies provide the best test of the long-term effects of TV violence. A major issue in this type of research is whether watching violent TV

increases aggression or whether aggressive children choose to watch more violent TV. However, the research indicates that the violent TV increases aggression. For example, in a longitudinal study by Eron, Huesmann, Lefkowitz, and Walder (1972), the correlation between boys' exposure to TV violence at age 8 and their aggression at age 18 was .31, whereas the correlation of age 8 aggression with age 18 exposure to TV violence was about zero. In a 15-year longitudinal study conducted by Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, and Eron (2003), the correlation between a child's exposure to TV violence at age 8 and aggression 15 years later was significant for both men and women, even after controlling for level of aggression at age 8. High television violence viewers at age 8 were much more likely to have abused their spouses and perpetrated acts of serious physical aggression than were low television violence viewers. Similar effects have been found in longitudinal studies conducted in other countries, such as Finland, Poland, and Israel.

In summary, longitudinal field studies have shown that children who grow up watching a lot of TV violence are likely to behave more aggressively later in childhood, in adolescence, and in young adulthood. This finding holds up even if one controls for differences in initial aggressiveness, intellectual functioning, and social class. The bottom line is that, on average, TV violence is making our children behave more aggressively in childhood, and the aggressive habits they learn from TV in childhood carry over into adolescence and even young adulthood.

EFFECT SIZE

The entertainment industry claims that the effect of TV violence on aggression is so small that the risks to society and its members are negligible. However, Bushman and Anderson (2001) found that the effect of TV violence on aggression is larger than many other effects that people accept as indisputable facts, such as the effect of asbestos on cancer, the effect of lead poisoning on mental functioning, or the effect of secondhand smoke on lung cancer. A study by Bushman and Cooper (1990) found that the effect of TV violence on aggression is about the same size as the effect of alcohol on aggression. Thus, the size of the effect is substantial rather than trivial.

—Brad J. Bushman and Daniel W. Brickman

See also Aggression, Movies and; Media Exposure; Movies, Violence in; Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to; Violence, Effects of

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ALCOHOL ADVERTISING, EFFECTS OF

Research has established that children and adolescents see a great deal of alcohol advertising and that more

frequent exposure is associated with alcohol use. It has been more difficult, however, to determine whether more frequent exposure *causes* alcohol use. Recent studies increasingly make it appear that a causal link exists. Perhaps more importantly, scholars have begun to identify the conditions under which exposure to alcohol advertising predicts alcohol-related attitudes and behaviors. Generally, scholars believe that repeated exposure to alcohol advertising influences children to the extent to which their interpretations of messages lead them to conclude that alcohol use is normative, appealing, and rewarding. Effects are magnified if messages are reinforced by real-life observations.

Studies have verified that children's exposure to alcohol advertising begins early and greatly increases as they reach adolescence. Three of every four beverage ads in magazines and video programming popular among adolescents promotes an alcoholic beverage. Research indicates that alcoholic beverage advertisers spent more than $30 million to place more than 2,600 ads for alcoholic beverage advertising on the 15 television programs most popular with teens in 2003. The number of ads appearing in programs for which 12–to-20-year-olds composed more than 30% of the audience increased by 48.3% between 2001 and 2003. As a result, the average young person saw two beer ads for every three viewed by an adult in 2003, and three ads for fruit-flavored distilled spirits—commonly called *alcopops*—for every four ads seen by an adult.

Experiments and surveys with children and adolescents have found that those attracted to beer advertising are more likely to desire merchandise featuring beer themes and alcohol brand logos. The appeal of the merchandise is associated with earlier and more frequent use of alcoholic beverages.

It seems likely that young people would be influenced by such a torrent of messages. It is well established that commercial advertisers can influence children with strategies that show how products can meet their emotional needs and desires. For example, marketers recommend using young girls' desire for beauty, glamour, and fun to target them, and they recommend advertising that depicts power, bravery, or gross humor to target boys.

Marketers frequently employ these themes in alcohol advertising. It is unsurprising, then, that alcohol ads are well received by adolescents. Research indicates, for example, that 16- and 17-year-old adolescents, and especially boys who drink, like alcohol advertising featuring humor and sex, can correctly identify alcoholic beverage brands, and can recall the advertising specifically associated with each brand.

Meanwhile, many studies have indicated that, as young people's exposure to alcohol advertising increases, the likelihood of their experimentation with alcohol increases as well. The association between exposure and behavior, however, does not prove on its own that alcohol advertising influences children to become underage drinkers. Moreover, not all studies have found this association. Scholars therefore have turned their attention to the conditions under which children and adolescents internalize problematic messages about alcohol use. Studies have established, for example, that children develop expectations and intentions about alcohol use well before they begin drinking it.

Research indicates that preadolescent children are uniquely susceptible to the influence of advertising messages because they lack the cognitive skills of older children and are skillfully targeted by advertisers. Because children are still developing their critical thinking skills at least until the eighth grade, they tend to respond easily to characters that are strong, fun, popular, and attractive. Studies show that the techniques marketers recommend for use with children—and to which scholars show that children are susceptible—frequently are present in alcoholic beverage advertising. Indeed, many studies have verified that alcohol ads that include these elements appeal to children and adolescents. Some studies, including one

that asked underage drinkers if they thought they were targets of the ads, have concluded that advertisers intentionally target underage viewers.

Whether or not children constitute an intended target for alcohol advertising, research has shown that many preadolescents have favorite brands and a high affinity for alcohol ads and campaigns. They typically give alcoholic beverage advertising high marks for good music, bright colors, and a good amount of action, style, and humor. Positive responses to televised beer advertisements from 10-to-17-year-olds have been associated with an increase in the frequency of participants' current and future expected future drinking.

Some studies have used play behavior to study children's modeling of alcohol use while too young to obtain access to it on their own. These studies have found that children as young as 2 years of age drink alcohol and imitate purchasing and drinking behavior. They also have found that most children understand the difference between alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, along with social norms for the use of alcohol, by the time they enter elementary school. Elementary school children who find alcohol advertising appealing have been found more likely to choose an alcohol-themed toy, and the desire for such products have been found to associate with earlier use of alcohol among adolescents.

Ultimately, existing research indicates that children do internalize messages from alcoholic beverage advertising in their decision making about alcohol. Studies show that children are very much aware of alcoholic beverage advertising and that such advertising may have a stronger influence on young people than on adults. Some research suggests that an affinity for alcoholic beverage advertising associates with the age of reported first use and with heavier drinking among college students. Nevertheless, conclusions tend to be based on a variety of separate studies based on content analysis, exposure patterns, or receivers' interpretations of content. Studies often rely on cross-sectional survey designs or laboratory experiments. The need continues to exist for longitudinal field studies that bridge these methods to account for what appears to be children's gradual internalization of messages about alcohol into their decision making.

—Erica Weintraub Austin and Bruce E. Pinkleton

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Advertising, Effects on Children; Media Effects; Media Literacy; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory.

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ALCOHOL ADVERTISING, INTERNATIONAL

All over the world, public health organizations promote restrictions on alcohol advertising because of the potential negative health consequences of alcohol

consumption. Health organizations are especially worried about the effects of advertising on minors, and, according to them, much advertising is especially directed toward young people because the alcohol industry needs to recruit new drinkers. This accusation is denied by representatives of the alcohol industry, who claim that advertising is not aimed at young people but that its purpose is to increase the market share of specific brands among existing users of alcoholic beverages. As a result of this debate, many countries have imposed restrictions upon the advertising of alcoholic beverages. Often, special restrictions are implemented with respect to advertising that targets children and adolescents.

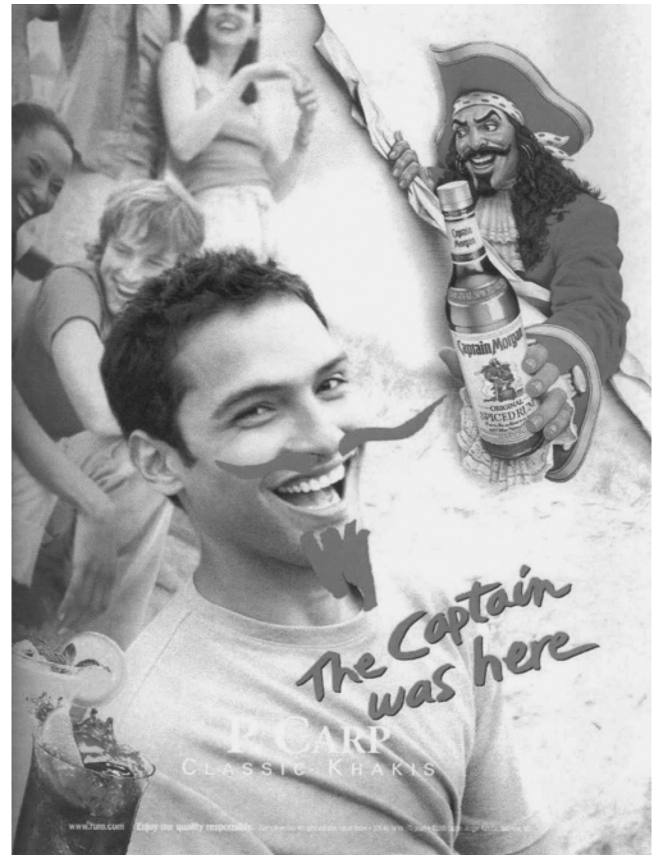
REGULATION OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

Two types of regulations restrict alcohol advertising: statutory regulations and nonstatutory self-regulations. Statutory regulations are embedded in law and issued by the government. Nonstatutory self-regulations are voluntary codes of advertising practices. These self-regulations are often issued by national nongovernmental organizations that are sponsored by the alcohol-producing industry. For instance, in the United States, the Beer Institute, which represents the interests of more 200 brewers, has developed an advertising code for beer advertising.

Both statutory regulations and nonstatutory self-regulations may contain restrictions on the media in which advertising is allowed as well as on the content of alcohol advertising. Also, the regulations may differ according to the type of alcohol. A report of the World Health Organization published in 2004 showed that alcohol advertising is banned completely in 5% of the countries (e.g., Norway). No legal or self-regulatory restrictions are imposed in 27% of the countries (e.g., Cambodia). Nonstatutory self-regulations are found in 10% of the countries (e.g., Australia), statutory regulations are found in 48% of the countries (e.g., Mexico), and a combination of voluntary and statutory regulations is found in 10% of the countries (e.g., Italy).

Advertising Bans

The most effective way to prevent alcohol advertising from reaching children is a complete ban on all advertising, but such bans are found in only 5% of the countries. More often, advertising is legally banned from a limited number of media. Advertising for alcoholic beverages that contain a high percentage of alcohol (e.g., spirits) are more often banned than advertising for alcoholic beverages that are low in alcohol (e.g., beer). For instance, 16% of the countries ban all beer advertising on television (e.g., France) but 29% ban television advertising for spirits (e.g., the Russian Federation). About the same proportion of restrictions is found with respect to radio advertising, but advertising in print media such as magazines is less often legally banned. Only 11% of the countries do not allow print advertising



Print and Web-based advertising for alcoholic beverages often features themes and images known to appeal to children and adolescents. These range from cartoons and animals to sexual stereotypes and slapstick humor. According to the Captain Morgan website, its top markets in 2005 included the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and South Africa. The company also states that Captain Morgan is the seventh-ranked "spirit" brand worldwide.

of spirits, and only 4% do not allow print advertising of beer.

Many regulations contain special provisions to prevent alcohol advertising from targeting minors. Regulations may ban advertising on billboards in school buildings or in the vicinity of schools (e.g., Denmark). Often, it is forbidden to advertise in print media the readership of which consists of a significant number of children and adolescents. The definition of *significant number* differs from country to country, but most often it is defined as 50% (e.g., United States) or 25% (e.g., The Netherlands). Similarly, advertising around television and radio programs that are watched or listened to by a majority of underage persons can be disallowed. Another approach to limiting children's exposure to alcohol advertising on television is to restrict the hours at which such advertising can appear. Regulations occasionally include rules that alcohol advertising on television cannot be broadcast before a certain time, which varies from 8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (e.g., Spain and Thailand). Advertising may also be prohibited at sporting, musical, or other special events that a significant number of children and adolescents attend as actors or spectators.

Restrictions on the Content of Advertising

Not only can advertising be banned, its content can also be restricted. Many countries have developed rules to prevent children and adolescents from being attracted to alcohol consumption as a result of advertising exposure. Examples are rules that ban the following content:

- Styles (e.g., cartoon characters, motifs, or colors) that appeal to young people or that are associated with youth culture.
- Prominent public figures or role models who appeal to minors (e.g., actors, sporting heroes, or pop stars).
- Depictions of children, adolescents, young-looking models, or (in particular) minors consuming alcoholic beverages. *Young-looking* usually is defined as under 18 or under 25 years of age.
- Portrayals of alcohol consumption that imply the achievement of social, sexual, or sporting success.
- Portrayals of alcohol drinking as a sign of maturity.

THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF COMMUNICATION

Increasingly, a problem with national regulations is that advertising crosses borders. Magazines that are produced in countries that allow alcohol advertising may be for sale in countries that prohibit alcohol print advertising. Advertising around international sporting events is broadcast on networks all over the world, and music satellite channels can be received in numerous countries. In the last few years, the steep rise of Internet use has offered enormous new possibilities for advertising. These possibilities are used also by the alcohol industry, and practically all brands have developed Internet sites. Sites created by large international companies are more or less identical throughout the world. These sites not only offer product information but also quite often offer games, gadgets, and downloads that young people find appealing. On most sites, users must declare that they are over a certain age (e.g., 18 or 21) before entering the site. However, if adolescents falsely declare that they are older, they can enter as well. For example, in the United States the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth studied the age of the visitors of 55 websites of alcohol producers. Their data showed that 13% of the visitors of these websites were underage persons. These rapid new developments extend beyond national boundaries and therefore are outside the control of national regulations. So far, there are no international guidelines that have legal regulatory status.

—Bas van den Putte

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Exposure to; Advertising, Persuasive Intent of; Alcohol Advertising, Effects of; Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Tobacco Advertising, International

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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is a professional organization of pediatricians committed to achieving the organization's mission of attaining "optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults" (2005; www.aap.org). It currently has 60,000 members. An essential way the AAP has fulfilled its advocacy role in recent years is through Media Matters, a national campaign dedicated to promoting awareness of media's impact on young audiences among other physicians, parents, and children.

The AAP was founded in June 1930 by a group of 35 physicians in Detroit, Michigan, who specialized in health issues affecting children. When the AAP was established, the notion that children have special developmental and health needs was new and progressive. Preventive health practices that are now associated with child care, such as immunizations and regular checkups, were only beginning to change the practice of treating children as younger versions of adults.

The AAP employs 350 individuals, supports 59 chapters in the United States and 7 in Canada, and works to educate and prevent medical and health problems worldwide. One way in which the AAP is able to reach beyond America's borders is through more than 1,000 international members from more than 60 countries, and the group has been able to establish connections with similar societies in Mexico, Brazil, and India. The AAP also publishes original research in social, economic, and behavioral areas and supports the funding of outside research endeavors relating to children's health and well-being.

One of the many functions that the AAP performs is making recommendations regarding the media's impact on children and adolescents. One AAP recommendation that has been the subject of much attention is its position that children 2 years of age and younger should not be exposed to any screen media, because the potential implications of such exposure remain unclear. In a 2004 study published by Gentile and colleagues, more than 8 in 10 pediatricians (84%) reported that TV watching has a negative effect on infants' and preschool-age (parallels *school-age,* per *Websters)* children's brain development, although the study also revealed that pediatricians are often unaware of the AAP recommendations and generally recommend that parents limit media use to less than 2 hours each day.

The Media Matters campaign was launched in 1997 and is intended to raise the public's consciousness about the influence of media (television, movies, computer and video games, the Internet, advertising, popular music, etc.) on child and adolescent health. The organization understands that a great deal of the information to which children have access comes from various media outlets and that the information children receive from media sources can impact their thinking on public health issues. Subjects addressed by this campaign include the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; aggression and violence; sex and sexual exploitation; and obesity and poor nutrition. An essential component of this campaign is to teach the basic skills of media literacy and critical thinking about media as well as to encourage people to become more discriminating about their media use habits.

The AAP considers the role of the pediatrician a crucial part of children's lives in regard to education on health and safety issues. In an effort to educate associated pediatricians about the impact of media on the lives of children, part of the Media Matters campaign is dedicated to bringing awareness to pediatricians. Research has shown that the key areas of concern about which the AAP feels pediatricians can provide education are aggression and violence, substance abuse, nutrition, obesity and dieting, sexuality and body image, and advertising and consumerism. In this new role, according to the information the AAP provides to its members, it is important for pediatricians to "understand and confront how images and messages in the media affect the health and well-being of adolescents." The organization believes that, as experts on child and adolescent health, pediatricians need to be at the forefront of this issue.

In reaching the crucial goals of media literacy and education with children and parents, AAP believes that the first step is to build an awareness of the hundreds of media messages with which children daily come in contact. The development of critical thinking and viewing skills is crucial to the success of media literacy. The AAP, by bringing media education into the realm of health professionals, intends to help children, adolescents, and parents understand that all media messages are constructed for a purpose, that

media images shape people's understanding of the world, that every individual interprets media messages differently, and that the mass media industry is driven by powerful political and economic forces. Through this campaign effort, pediatricians will be disseminating media literacy information to parents and children and talking to families about their media usage habits.

Through the Media Matters campaign, another goal of the AAP is to bring media education into the homes of families. The AAP provides parents with materials and suggestions to help them bring media issues to the forefront in their homes. The AAP brochure titled *Understanding the Impact of Media on Children and Teens* suggests ways families can constructively promote media education in their homes, such as by setting limits on television time, making deliberate program choices and appointment times for using media, prohibiting television viewing at use at mealtime, and asking the right questions to help children become critical viewers and encourage productive conversations about media.

Ongoing education is a critical part of Media Matters. The AAP provides ongoing support for trainees as they work with parents, teachers, children, schools, legislators, and media to help people become media educated. The organization continues to offer workshops at its national meetings and at other organizations, such as the American Public Health Association, the American School Health Association, and the National Media Education Conference. Additionally, the Committee on Communications has developed a policy statement on media education that focuses on the public health impact of media and how the medical community can begin to address these areas of concern. The Media Matters campaign has generated numerous articles in national publications, such as *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, about its successful efforts to curb the negative effects of media.

—Andrea M. Bergstrom

See also Media Education, Family Involvement in; Media Education, Schools and; Media Matters Campaign

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ANIME

Anime, Japanese animated films, although technically similar to the child-oriented cartoon offerings of American animation studios, are distinguished by their adult themes and complex story lines. The word *anime,* sometimes written as *animé* to make the pronunciation clear, is a shortening of the English word *animation.*

The earliest Japanese animated films, which date from 1915, dramatized folk tales using traditional artistic techniques or imitated the pace and humor of Western cartoons. In 1937, under strict government censorship, animators were restricted to producing cartoons for military propaganda.

Following World War II, studios continued cartoon production. However, release of Osamu Tezuka's TV series *Astro Boy* (1963–1966), based upon his *manga* (Japanese comic book) series, transformed animation. The series' futuristic, action-packed story line, sparse graphics, and wide-eyed characters set the tone for future anime. Tezuka cited Disney's animations as his inspiration. The adventures of the boy robot *Astro Boy,* created to replace a scientist's dead son, were immediately popular. *Astro Boy* also became popular with American audiences. Following *Astro Boy,* Tezuka (who is considered today to be the father of anime) established animation as acceptable for all ages by creating ever more sophisticated stories with adult themes along with children's entertainment.

Anime are a commercial art form made for specific age groups, though most are for adolescents and teens. All genres found in live action films are used in anime, including children's stories, fairy tales, science fiction, fantasy, historical drama, romance, horror, paranormal, thrillers, and erotica and pornography. The most popular anime combine themes (action, romance, science fiction, etc.) and explore the shifting nature of identity in modern society.

Artistic styles vary widely, though anime studios generally have an established style that the artists follow. Fewer details and frame changes per scene

than most Western animation give anime a choppy feeling, though the artists make up for this by also including scenes with many more details and frames for emphasis.

From 1963 to the 1980s, most anime appeared on Japanese TV. In the 1980s, the introduction of video recorders allowed artists to create animation that did not conform to TV requirements for length, number of episodes, and costs. Popular titles were adapted to TV or film formats. Theatrical releases, half of Japan's film output in 1999, have higher production values. Anime that contemplates the fluidity of one's character in modern society and combines a science fiction, action, or romance motif have proven to be the most successful.

Many of the anime that followed *Astro Boy* replicated the series use of the science fiction genre, reflecting both society's fears about the destructive power of science and its positive attitude toward technological innovations. These stories were eclipsed by series that explored the problems of a technologically based society and by epics focusing on giant robots such as *Gundam.* (Originally introduced in 1979, *Gundam* movies and television series remain popular today.)

One aspect of anime that separates it from cartoons is reality. Heroes often fail or even die, sometimes without any apparent reason. Although this seems harsh, anime fans see it as reflecting real life, in which triumph and justice are not always accorded to those trying to do right and be good.

Though clearly set in an unreal landscape, Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind,* released in 1984, contained themes of environmental destruction that led to its brief banning in some European countries. The film created demand for socially conscious anime in both Japan and the United States. The significant alterations made to the American release, which changed it from a dark story of ecological danger to a rather tame adventure story, also led to Miyazaki's insistence on "no-edit" clauses for future releases. Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (2002) won the Oscar for best animated feature-length film at the 2003 Academy Awards, and his film *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004) set box office records when it was released in Japan.

American imports increased in the 1990s, with some on TV (*Sailor Moon,* 1995–1997; *Gundam,* 2001) and others on video or DVD. In 1998, *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) topped the *Billboard* video sales charts. Twenty anime series were broadcast on American TV in 2003. Some fans complain that editing to remove objectionable content, generally sex and violence, turns anime into cartoons; these fans prefer DVD releases, which allow selection of original, dubbed, or subtitled versions. Controversial is the prevalence of *fansubs* (fan-created subtitles) for bootleg series not released in America. Some fans decry this; others claim fan translations create demand for the DVD.

Most American fans are teens and college students. Many American fans consider Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* (1988), which graphically depicts government corruption and individual alienation in modern society, to best illustrate the genre's vitality.

Studies of anime suggest that it can play a positive role in a variety of literacies. A study of the impact of the Pokémon anime series, which was introduced on American TV in 1996, suggests that, far from being detrimental to learning and literacy, anime encourages an active, pleasurable learning experience that can help improve literacy. Studies also suggest that anime, along with manga, are a particularly rich source for the production of fan fiction by adolescents. Fan fiction, or *fanfic*, is genre of text production in which fans use popular culture to provide a starting point for their own stories. The construction of fan fiction, which is often written in collaboration, allows adolescents to learn to read texts more deeply and contributes to development of their literacy skills.

—Tamara Swenson

See also Japan, Media in; Manga (Japanese Comic Books)

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ANTI-DRUG MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

From the 1930s movie *Reefer Madness* to the 1980s "Just Say No" and "Cocaine: The Big Lie" campaigns to, most recently, the large-scale U.S. National Anti-Drug Youth Media Campaign, scholars, advocates, and critics have long pointed to examples of mass media content intended to curb adolescent drug use. These efforts stem in part from periods of intolerance for drug use that have existed in many Western societies and that have been fueled by more recent scientific data showing the harmful consequences of illicit drug use. Despite this collective attention to drug use, nonetheless, two questions remain open to debate: whether anti-drug media campaigns are effective and ethical, and how media content and drug use in general are linked.

ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGNS: PAST AND PRESENT

Media-based campaigns to discourage drug use have been planned and implemented around the world, from Hong Kong to Bolivia. Many of the most prominent examples in recent years, however, have been based in the United States. Those efforts have differed in their use of media channels, in the degree to which campaigns have paid for placement of campaign materials, and in the extent of evaluation conducted. The Reagan administration's "Just Say No" effort in the 1980s, for example, was largely a public relations effort with no formal summative evaluation. In contrast, a large-scale campaign initiated by the Office of National Drug Control Policy in the late 1990s—the aforementioned National Anti-Drug Youth Media endeavor—included the use of major commercial advertising agencies to develop advertisements, the purchase of airtime and print space in a variety of high-profile venues, and formal evaluation by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and third-party researchers. On a different level, a host of state and regional media campaigns have been funded in recent decades in the United States, in addition to school- and faith-based programs, although we currently lack solid scientific evaluation of such campaigns.

These and other anti-drug media campaigns have tended to vary considerably in their use of communication theory and behavioral theory. Efforts such as the aforementioned "Just Say No" project offered simple admonition to children and adolescents to stay away from drugs. More recent efforts have attempted to incorporate behavioral models—such as value expectancy theories, which see drug use behavior as subject to the influence of a range of beliefs about the pleasure and utility of drug use, others' expectations about drugs, and one's own ability to avoid drugs—into campaign planning. On a different plane, some of these campaigns specifically consider the impact of placement and editing in light of media preferences that those likely to experiment with drugs tend to exhibit.

CAMPAIGN EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS

Given the diversity of various campaign efforts, it is not surprising that, when campaigns have been formally evaluated, results have varied. We do not yet have sufficient evidence to declare that media-based efforts either always do or always do not affect drug use among children and adolescents. Some large-scale efforts (e.g., the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign) have failed to yield persuasive evidence of impact, whereas some smaller, targeted efforts (e.g., the Two Cities Anti-Drug Television Campaign conducted in Kentucky and Tennessee) have shown evidence in favor of intended effects with specific audiences. As a result, answering the question of whether media-based drug use prevention campaigns directly discourage drug use is not a simple task.

What we do know is that certain patterns tend to plague campaigns intended to reach adolescents (and other audiences) and to complicate the evaluations of those campaigns. And there is consensus among scholars and practitioners that anti-drug campaigns, and media campaigns in general, often fail to demonstrate effects for multiple reasons. For instance, many campaign planners fail to conduct adequate precampaign (formative) research to collect the information needed either to design messages in a way that will address the audience's existing beliefs or to place the messages strategically in media where they will be seen, heard, or read by the target audience. Additionally, campaigns that do not identify a specific audience segment to which the campaign is most relevant often make the mistake of trying to get the message out to the undifferentiated masses. Instead, campaign planners generally agree that it is important to specify a target audience in order to design more effective and appealing messages. Campaigns for

specific groups of adolescents, for example, can ensure that campaign messages achieve widespread and frequent exposure among the target group of adolescents for a sufficient amount of time. Finally, evaluation design also has played an important role in shaping our knowledge on this question. To date, many evaluations rely on a pretest and a posttest to indicate the campaign's effectiveness. Such limited information, however, does not account for the secular trend of the behavior both prior to the pretest and during the campaign. Longitudinal data collection, well before the campaign starts as well as after the campaign ends, is typically a good solution for detecting both secular trends and the effects of the campaign. A control group is also desirable.

Beyond questions of evaluation design and analysis, in some instances media messages intended to discourage drug use also actually may activate or reinforce positive attitudes toward drugs, a reactance phenomenon sometimes labeled as a boomerang effect. The effect may surface when an adolescent sees or hears an ad that the adolescent feels threatens his or her choice to act autonomously. Similarly, a boomerang effect may occur among drug users who are presented with threatening messages about dire consequences that do not include any recommendations for avoiding the threat. Adolescents can and sometimes do process messages in a defensive—or at least a biased—manner.

EXAMPLES OF CAMPAIGN OUTCOMES

The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign offers a good example of the mixed results in this arena. Despite the fact that the campaign remains somewhat of a benchmark for the design and execution of campaigns for adolescents and their parents, it has yet to produce substantial results that evidence its success in reducing adolescent drug use. Although teenage marijuana use decreased during the campaign, the campaign's evaluators have yet to associate the drop in adolescent drug use specifically with exposure to the campaign. At the same time, it also might be the case that the campaign did not produce a uniform effect: Indeed, independent studies suggest that some of the message frames were more successful than other message strategies with certain audience segments.

On the other hand, evidence that anti-drug media campaigns do work under some circumstances is provided in a television-only anti-marijuana campaign (the Two City campaign noted earlier) that specifically targeted so-called sensation-seeking adolescents. Sensation seekers are those who often seek out various thrill-providing activities to satisfy their higher-than-average need for stimulation. High-sensation seekers also appear to have very specific media preferences, often preferring media that contain graphic or intense images and sounds and that are arousing, stimulating, and fast-paced. By acknowledging these preferences, campaign planners in the Two City example developed multiple anti-drug ads with characteristics that should have appealed to high-sensation seekers and employed them in two 4-month campaigns in Lexington, Kentucky, and Knoxville, Tennessee. Longitudinal time-series analyses revealed significant drops in marijuana use among high-sensation seekers in both cities.

Underpinning the campaign in the Two City example is a strategy that has been formally labeled *SENTAR,* short for Sensation Seeking Targeting. The four principle steps of SENTAR are (1) segment and target the at-risk sensation seeking audience, (2) design high-sensation-value messages that are most effective with this audience, (3) purchase airtime, and (4) place messages in programming contexts mostly likely to be viewed by the target audience. Although SENTAR has been successful in anti-drug (marijuana and inhalant) television contexts, it remains to be seen whether the strategy is effective with other substances, such as alcohol or tobacco.

BEYOND CAMPAIGNS: MEDIA COVERAGE OF DRUGS

Prevention campaigns also do not operate in isolation and instead face a media landscape that is varied in its depiction of drugs, a fact that contributes to the difficulty that proactive efforts sometimes face in generating sufficient exposure for specific campaign messages. In the past century, for example, a variety of noncampaign sources have contributed to the American information environment with regard to drugs. The topic of illicit drug use periodically surfaces in the news, as evidenced by celebrity drug deaths or drug-related foreign policy stories, although the typical frames of such stories focus on the event at hand rather than larger themes, and such coverage often disappears as quickly as it appeared. Moreover, illicit drug use is sometimes depicted in television programming or other entertainment media, although the picture there has been an uneven one as well.

Content analyses suggest that illicit drug use, and especially use framed in a positive light, is not especially prevalent in contemporary broadcast television. At the same time, evidence also suggests that other outlets, such as music videos or movies, sometimes offer a more explicit and potentially more encouraging depiction of some kinds of drug use.

ETHICAL ISSUES

Despite the large amount of money that is often spent on anti-drug efforts, and the not-for-profit nature of such campaigns, questions have been raised as to whether such endeavors sometimes cross important ethical boundaries. All communication campaigns rest on certain assumptions about values, and drug prevention efforts are no exception. Two examples of ethical issues raised about media-based drug prevention efforts involve the selection of certain drug use as a target and potential unintended effects on addicted users and their interaction with society.

Critics worrying about the justification for contemporary drug prevention efforts sometimes point to the fact that at the same time that large-scale drug campaigns are funded, direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising nonetheless invites consumers to view pharmaceuticals in general as potential solutions to life's problems. Changes in U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations of DTC advertising in the 1990s, in fact, have led to an increased amount of such advertising on U.S. airwaves, including advertisements for lifestyle-enhancement drugs that trouble some. From a policy perspective, some argue that funding campaigns against illicit drugs and allowing DTC advertising are countervailing actions.

Some critics also worry that some methods used to discourage adolescents from trying illicit drugs, such as emphasizing the moral depravity of drug use, may portray those who are currently addicted to drugs as morally inferior or undeserving of treatment assistance. Such concerns raise important questions about the trade-offs involved in certain media-based strategies. These questions are especially important in light of the questionable efficacy of strategies that focus solely on negative consequences.

—Michael T. Stephenson and Brian G. Southwell

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Drug Use, Depictions of; Educational Television, Effects of; Media Effects; Television, Moral Messages on

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APPRECIATION INDEX

There are three widely known ways to appraise screen material, two of which are systematically representative of the public. For television programs and for movies, the size of the audience is estimated on the basis of representative audience methods. However, in several countries (the United Kingdom, Canada, Netherlands, Australia, and elsewhere) another systematically representative assessment method has been used and in some cases is still used: the measurement of appreciation. Movies and television programs are also awarded prizes (Oscars and Emmys); however, the prize juries, although influential and knowledgeable, are "invisible" and do not represent the public. Thus, this method of assessment is nonrepresentative (and thus potentially misleading).

In a democratic society, in which votes count as opinions, the box office and audience size measures are widely supposed to denote popularity or liking. Yet, many other elements, such as publicity, release times, and channels, also influence how many people see a work; thus, simple audience size is not an automatic index of merit. The faction that treats large audience sizes as simple good news consists of marketers and advertisers. For them, a good program is one with a large audience, which is why they support "the ratings" as measures of value; such ratings do measure marketplace income.

All this obscures an important dimension that has been measured in many countries by an Appreciation Index (AI), as explained by J. Mallory Wober in his 1988 book *The Use and Abuse of Television.* The AI—usually measured confidentially—is found by asking representative samples of the viewing public to rate each program they see on a scale. Currently, the UK system uses a scale from 0 to 10; the viewers who give an opinion for a program are a representation of its audience, and their marks are averaged and expressed on a scale from 0 to 100. Thus, the AI is a systematically represented evaluation of a program. There is much evidence that the AI is a reliable measure. At least two projects measured AIs for programs in the United States. The AIs in these U.S. projects (both now discontinued) were very similar to AIs for these same programs shown in the United Kingdom.

AI results show that some programs have small audiences and low appreciation and would find it difficult to survive in commercial conditions. Yet other programs have small audiences but high AIs, suggesting a value that has escaped assessment in the market. Such a program might gain a larger audience shown at some other time and thus be valuable to broadcasters; but it also points to a social value or public benefit that broadcasters in many countries have wanted to identify and sustain.

The *Encyclopedia of Children, Adolescents, and the Media* is likely to have a modest or even low level of circulation (a measure equivalent to the so-called program ratings in TV) compared with that of a Harry Potter movie; yet an assessment (or true *rating*) by a representative sample of its readers might reveal a score as good as, or perhaps even better than, that given by Potter moviegoers using a similar rating method. The two methods of assessment show some similarities in some situations but are more truly complementary and different. Both are useful and valuable, and the appreciation results should certainly be obtained where possible and not kept confidential.

Barrie Gunter and Mallory Wober found that, among early teen viewers in the UK, the categories of situation comedy and American and Australian drama series shown in the UK gained the highest AIs, with news and documentaries receiving much lower AIs. Viewers aged 16–24 showed similar likings, but documentaries were ranked higher. These priorities of appreciation are very different from those found among older viewers. For marketers, there is evidence that advertisements may themselves be evaluated differently depending on the AIs of the programs in which they are contained.

—J. Mallory Wober

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AROUSAL THEORIES

Arousal is a central concept in the analysis of moods and emotions, regardless of whether these experiences occur in actual social situations or are elicited by veridical or fictional media presentations. Although the conceptualizations of arousal show marked differences, some form of physical excitedness is consistently invoked as the primary determinant of the intensity of emotional experience and behavior. Much research attention has been given to the possibility of manipulating this intensity, especially in the context of media entertainment with its apparent agenda to maximize emotional experience. Theories of sensation seeking address the latent yearning for excessive excitement, especially among emotionally labile adolescents and young adults. Excitation-transfer theory, moreover, deals with the escalation of emotions, in particular with the exploitation of aversive emotions for the intensification of subsequent positive excitement, delight, exuberance, and exultation.

AROUSAL IN EMOTIONS AND MOODS

Arousal refers to the bodily condition of being roused, literally the experience of "shaking one's feathers."

In nonmetaphoric terms, being roused or aroused manifests itself in heightened overt and covert activity. Such states of acute arousal characterize all vital emotions, and the experience of these states is part of all strong feelings. Arousal is an essential component of pleasure and displeasure, sadness and happiness, love and hate, despair and elation, gaiety and dejection, rage and exultation, exhilaration and grief, frustration and triumph, merriment and fear, anger and joy, and other emotions of high experiential intensity. Although sexual activities are usually not included in the enumeration of emotions, they certainly have their place among acute emotions. The high arousal intensity associated with vital emotions is comparatively short-lived and is strongly focused on both causal circumstances and motivational implications.

Moods are considered affective states that are also associated with elevated arousal. In contrast to emotions, however, moods are characterized by lower arousal intensities that persist for longer periods of time. Additionally, whereas emotions are instigated by apparent causes and, in turn, instigate cause-determined actions, moods lack such focus and are marked by motivational diffuseness instead.

Individual differences in emotionality and moodiness can be pronounced, as can developmental differences. During childhood and adolescence, for instance, the control of impulsive emotions and lingering moods tends to be wanting, mostly because of developmentally lagging anticipatory and judgmental skills.

CONCEPTIONS OF AROUSAL AND ITS FUNCTION

In earlier theories of motivation and emotion, arousal was treated as a unitary force energizing behavior that receives direction by independent means. Behavior theory likened arousal to an engine that drives, but does not guide, overt actions. The necessary guidance was thought to come from impulses that, at any given time, were dominant in the habit structure, this structure being partly determined by instinct but mostly established through learning. Arousal or drive strength was not directly measured and thus remained a hypothetical construct.

Activation theory similarly construed arousal as the behavior energizer and held some form of cognition accountable for behavior guidance. In contrast to behavior theory, however, activation theory committed itself to measuring arousal strength. It focused on activities in the brainstem reticular formation. Measured in wave patterns and rhythms of the encephalogram, states ranging from coma through sleep, drowsiness, relaxed wakefulness, and alert attentiveness to strong, excited emotions were distinguished and used to map emotional intensity.

In a two-factor theory of emotion, Stanley Schachter (1964) adopted the apparent dichotomy of energization by arousal and guidance by cognition. As some of the research conducted in connection with the theory involved the injection of epinephrine (an adrenal hormone that activates sympathetic excitation), arousal was implicitly operationalized as heightened sympathetic nervous system activity. Following suggestions by William James, who had emphasized both the intero- and exteroception of arousal as emotion determinants (e.g., heart pounding or palm sweating, respectively), Schachter's theorizing focused on such feedback as indicators of the intensity of feelings and emotions. Specifically, Schachter argued that the awareness of being aroused, as mediated by sensations of bodily reactions, instigates an epistemic search for the reactions' causes and that the cognitive evaluation of the causal circumstances provides the comprehension of which particular feeling or emotion is experienced.

Dolf Zillmann proposed a three-factor theory of emotion that retained the distinction between energization by arousal and guidance by cognition. In order to account for the origination of arousal reactions that is left unaddressed in Schachter's two-factor theory, the guidance function was divided into a dispositional and an experiential component. The dispositional factor integrates ontogenetically fixed and acquired dispositions in explaining autonomic reactivity and the guidance of deliberate as well as impulsive overt behavior. The experiential factor entails the cognitive appraisal of prevailing circumstances, including the appraisal of bodily feedback. In case these appraisals indicate inappropriate reactivity, this factor functions as a corrective by redirecting overt behavior and, to the extent possible, by initiating the regulation of autonomic activity.

Three-factor theory incorporates Walter B. Cannon's (1932) conception of archaic emergency emotions. Cannon implicated sympathetic dominance in the autonomic nervous system with the function of providing energy for an episode of vigorous action as needed for fight and flight and, by extension, for sexual engagements. Although the conditions of modern life render most fight-flight reactions inappropriate, information about threats to personal welfare, or about opportunities for its enhancement, still generates strong arousal

reactions that, as evolutionary remnants, are meant to energize immediate emergency-resolving action. These strong arousal reactions become linked to all basic emotions and determine their behavioral intensity and the intensity of associated experiences.

Sympathetic arousal of both emotions and moods is thought to be controlled by brain structures integrated in the limbic system. The episodic versus tonic arousal supply of emotions and moods, respectively, is mediated by different endocrine mechanisms, however. The high excitatory intensity of emotions is primarily a function of activity in the sympathetic adrenomedullary system with its release of catecholamines. In contrast, the low excitatory intensity of moods is primarily mediated by activity in the pituitary adrenocortical system with its release of cortical steroids. Activity in the pituitary gonadal axis with its release of gonadal steroids is likely to assist the excitatory function of both these systems. But the intensity and duration differences between emotion and mood are by no means clear cut. Emotions may be repeatedly instigated and then amount to prolonged agitated behaviors and experiences. On the other hand, moods may give way to emotions or fatigue and thus terminate after brief manifestation.

THEORIES OF AROUSAL SEEKING AND MANIPULATION

The state of acute bodily arousal that accompanies intensely felt emotions is hedonically ambiguous and thus arbitrarily interpretable. Sympathetic arousal associated with acute anger, for instance, usually fuels an experience that is construed as unpleasant. However, the same arousal associated with triumph and exultation or with sexual activities can intensify experiences of genuine pleasure. Despite or perhaps because of this hedonic plasticity of arousal, its accumulation to extreme levels is often sought and the experience valued in its own right. Under the heading of excitement, intensely felt states of sympathetic arousal are often cherished as experiences of great pleasure. Adolescents and young adults, in particular, seem partial to seeking and taking pleasure from such extreme arousal states. Their obtrusive predilection has been attributed to increasing gonadal-hormone concentrations at the onset and during sexual maturation in concert with lagging prefrontal development. The changing hormonal conditions markedly heighten excitability, especially in young men whose androgen levels may rise up to twentyfold, whereas the still maturing central nervous system impairs the down-regulation of emotion, in large part because of a narrow focus on immediate gratification. Following adolescence, the belated maturation of the prefrontal structures is thought to enable appraisals of emotional reactivity that integrate situational, social, moral, and prospective considerations and thereby mitigate and compromise the unhampered escalation of excitation that characterizes the excessive emotionality in the preceding developmental stages.

Percy Tannenbaum (1980) considered arousal states in juxtaposition with boredom, a state characterized by minimal arousal levels, and suggested that essentially any jolt of arousal would be appreciated and hence preferred by persons living in a secure and dominantly hapless social environment. The premise that this precondition is prevalent in modern times might be questioned, however.

Marvin Zuckerman elaborated this consideration, arguing that humans, like other primates, are genetically prepared to cope with aversive conditions on a regular basis but that modern life deprives them of challenges, especially of physical challenges that would engage their innate abilities to protect and usurp. He focused on a need for stimulation, essentially an inclination to seek out challenges, as an individual difference variable in order to explain why some are more driven than others to jump from airplanes, climb cliffs, do drugs, or watch horror movies. In this conceptual framework, stimulation is attained for its excitatory quality and at times might even be deemed noxious throughout the experience. More likely is that challenging circumstances will come to an end and their termination, especially when brought about by effective coping maneuvers, can be expected to foster some degree of pleasure.

The transition from challenge to pleasurable reaction has led to proposals that make the intensity of pleasure partly, if not entirely, dependent on the intensity of preceding displeasure. Michael J. Apter (1992) invoked such a dependency. He distinguished zones of safety, danger, and trauma and proposed that nonrisky behavior in the safety zone is unexciting and humdrum; that risky behavior in the danger zone is exciting and enjoyable to the extent that trauma is avoided; and that risky behavior in the trauma zone, although exciting, causes harm and hence, if it is not fatal, displeasure. In this model, risky behaviors in the danger zone are the more enjoyable the closer they are to the border of the trauma zone. Prior risk maximization amounts to ultimate pleasure maximization, provided

the traumatic conditions are successfully negotiated. Playing it safe, on the other hand, is the formula for boredom because of the lack of arousal generation.

Apter has aggregated an impressive array of illustrations that seem to agree with his model. Car racing, roller coaster riding, rock climbing, hang gliding, bungee jumping, fugu (a highly toxic pufferfish) eating, juvenile wilding, and erotic scarfing are all considered demonstrations of the practice of pushing danger to the trauma edge in order to attain the most intense experiences of joyous excitement.

Apter's observations are consistent with the theory of excitation transfer proposed by Zillmann. This theory addresses the interdependencies between contiguous emotions and moods. More specifically, it addresses the intensification of affective reactions that occur later in a chain of reactions by residual arousal from affective reactions that occurred previously in that chain. The asynchrony between arousal processes and the cognitive appraisal of environmental changes is pivotal. Owing to the systemic hormonal mediation of sympathetic excitation, arousal reactions, once instigated, tend to outlast the emotions that were initially associated with them. In contrast, neurally mediated cognition can foster rapid comprehension of situational change and an adjustment to the new circumstances. The consequence of this time discrepancy in adjustment is that arousal from a prior emotion will linger when, by appraisal, it is superseded by another emotion; and given the hedonic plasticity of arousal, the lingering portions of arousal will combine with arousal produced by the new emotion and intensify this emotion. Most importantly, because arousal does not influence the hedonic quality of emotional experience, and because this quality is entirely determined by cognitive appraisal, the transfer of residual arousal can intensify hedonically opposite emotions. Arousal residues from unpleasant emotions can intensify pleasant emotions and vice versa.

Consider, for example, a woman who steps on a snake in the grass. The event is likely to instigate a strong arousal reaction along with evasive action. Consider further that it was a prank of her young son, who planted a rubber snake. Cognition reveals instantly that fear is groundless. Arousal, however, is just manifesting itself, and the woman is likely to tremble for minutes after the shock. During this period of residual excitation from fear, she is bound to react overly intensely to any emotion that her cognition dictates. She might feel abused, get angry, and overreact aggressively. On the other hand, she might feel foolish being angry and burst into hysterical laughter, exhibiting mirth to a degree that is entirely incommensurate with the safe sighting of a rubber snake.

Transfer theory, then, is capable of explaining the appeal of the extreme affect conversions from experiencing emotions such as fear and terror into emotions of great joy and elation upon surviving faced dangers unscathed. Crossing the hedonic divide from displeasure to pleasure need not involve extreme emotional reactions, however. In fairy tales, for instance, a degree of aroused apprehension about the welfare of a protagonist usually suffices in creating substantial euphoria upon a happy turn of events. The phenomenon of suspense in drama, sports, reality programming, and the news, as well as in the drama of daily life, generalizes this principal conversion. The appeal of media violence has been similarly explained as due to terror arousal that intensifies satisfaction with the justice-restoring heroics in concluding events.

The intensification of euphoric emotional reactions by residual arousal from noxious emotions is by no means the only affect transition that is open to manipulation by message sequencing. All conceivable transitions are. It has been demonstrated, for instance, that residues of pleasantly experienced sexual arousal that was induced by exposure to erotica can intensify reactions of acute anger to provocative revelations and ultimately facilitate aggressive outbursts. But it also has been shown that the embedding of sexually arousing erotic images in music videos can markedly enhance the enjoyment of music.

As the hedonic quality of mood also depends on the cognitive appraisal of the prevailing circumstances, mood changes are analogously subject to transfer enhancement. Although residual amounts of arousal from earlier moods may be comparatively small, they should nonetheless elevate the experience of different, newly materializing moods.

—Dolf Zillmann

See also Excitation-Transfer Theory; Fear Reactions; Physiological Arousal; Sensation Seeking; Violence, Desensitization Toward

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ASIA, MEDIA USE IN

Children and young people are fascinating to work with because their tastes are so diverse and their needs so specific. This diversity means that we need to internationalize our understanding of young people and learn how to study them in ways that are relevant to their experiences and situations. Children in Asia are the focus of this entry, with an emphasis on how they fit into a wider story of media in Asia and its influences and conditions of existence. Children in Asia comprise varied populations, and their media use is therefore not easily characterized. This entry offers categories of description and delineation that may be helpful in approaching the study and understanding of a crucial sector of the global media audience for television, film, publishing, radio, and the Internet. It argues in particular that it is useful to examine the impact of economic development, evolving national identity, and other cultural forces on the experience of Asian children who are consumers of media.

Asia encompasses highly developed social entities, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan, as well as areas of extremely uneven development, such as China, India, Indonesia, and North and South Korea. Although Southeast Asia, South Asia, North Asia, and the Asia Pacific regions share trans-sectoral similarities as a result of history and geography, each also has distinctive characteristics. This complicates any attempt at continent-wide assertion or analysis. However, it does offer a first point of call for sketching out possible parameters of study and thought. Development is a key feature of governance in much of modern Asia. This derives from a need to catch up to and compete with the modernity and attendant wealth achieved during the late 19th and 20th centuries in the United States and western Europe. In the post-colonial period, considered here to be from the 1940s through to the 1960s (with a few later exceptions), the shift from a dependent and often premodern economy to an upscale and ambitious program is best seen in the Singaporean model. Colonial economies have often been left underdeveloped by their colonial masters, a situation that has inhibited the formation of modern media and communications systems. Thus, after independence, nations such as Singapore have needed to catch up and develop modern systems, structures, and economic identities rather quickly.

The focus on development has tended to be at the expense of more relaxed approaches to modern life, and media expression has been a casualty of this need to make change effective and efficiently. This “developmentalism” has led to a functional approach to media and, as national media have emerged in the wake of empire, their role was (and is) seen to support the accelerated growth of national sovereignty, wealth, and stability. It can be argued that, given children’s centrality to the future of any nation—and especially to those nations that are really new in the sense that they are reinventing themselves as independent economic and political entities on the global stage—development is a relevant perspective from which to examine Asian children’s use of media.

THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON CHILDREN AS MEDIA CONSUMERS

Development and the media have been explored in scholarship on developmental journalism, particularly in relation to the Indonesian print media. The problem

underlying most of these discussions is how a national media may distinguish between necessary discipline in the construction of a sovereign entity and overly restrictive practices that curtail democratic aims and a free press. This argument is a useful starting point for looking at how children are understood as consumers and citizens in a media sphere. The core considerations might be as follows: Media regulation and content should support national priorities in a developmental economy. Education is almost always going to be one such priority, and therefore one might suppose that children's media might also be prioritized as a tool of social and cultural education. In practice, it seems that, although developmentalism is expressed in systems that differ greatly, all have a strong tendency to tie developmental policies to the ideologies of the central state. The result can be media that focus on education or media in which children are utterly forgotten. In Indonesia, where state ideology has referred to all people as "children of the nation," children themselves are not well served by media. In China—where children have been seen since the victory of the People's Liberation Army in 1949 as the successors to the nation, and where education is highly valued—there has been great emphasis on children's media needs. Developmentalism may also be an unspoken excuse for a total neglect of children's programming in an otherwise eclectic diet of nationalistic culture, religious epics, 24/7 news, and cricket, even when media are available in a number of local and national languages (as has been the case in India).

A very different scenario pertains to an already-developed economy, such as that of Japan, where there is a successful animation industry and where children's entertainment has—in tandem with adult counterparts in anime—become a marketable and valuable product both at home and overseas. In this case, the need for local content for an appropriate age level sits comfortably with the possibility of entertainment targeted at specific markets. Japanese children have led the way as consumers of mediated merchandise—one of the fruits of development.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

A second important area for concentration is the internationalization of children's television and film, an area that has been dominated by animation and merchandise and by American popular culture. Although Disney is important in Asia as it is globally, it has not captured the market. Japan's success as a media exporter has had an impact on Asia, and North and Southeast Asia in particular, where children are as likely to watch re-dubbed Japanese television shows as they are to be familiar with Disney, Children's Television Workshop (producers of *Sesame Street*), and any homegrown product. In China, for instance, patriotic Beijing primary school children were quite unhappy in 2002 to realize that their favorite cartoon shows on China Central Television were in fact Japanese products!

Internationalization is a contemporary buzzword in media studies, but it has been in progress for many years. As early as 1959, China and France supported a co-produced children's film, *The Kite*. However, it was the relationship in the late 1990s between Asian markets and the American blockbuster television show *Sesame Street*—a show that had blazed a trail in multicultural educational TV in the United States—that brought the idea of global Asian consumers to the fore. This iconic moment coincided with Disney's careful negotiations with Chinese state authorities to ensure airplay for their classics and space for their merchandise in a bid to build a new generation of faithful fans. At this time, it is unclear whether the efforts of Disney will work in the long run. Chinese consumers have in general quickly tired of the purported glamour of international luxury goods production. Furthermore, "creative China" is becoming an urban mantra for Chinese media development, and, as Michael Keane's work on creativity suggests, it is doubtful that international incursions will survive without strong efforts at co-production and localization. Being foreign in Asian markets is not a good business model in the long term.

LOCAL CONTENT AND SOCIAL PLANNING

A third way in which children's media use is likely to throw up interesting paradigms for study is in the forms of local content and social planning. In Malaysia, to take one post-developmental situation, there has been a noticeable movement toward the Islamicization of everyday life over the past 5 years, as shown, for example, in the demonization of non-religious teenage activities. In Malaysia, some teenage activities, such as heavy metal music fandom, are tied explicitly in the press to Satanist beliefs and cults. Of course, this music is also critiqued elsewhere, but the difference here is that arrests are made and bands disciplined on the basis not of antisocial behavior but

on the grounds that such music is antireligious and is leading young people astray. To date, there is a minimal scholarly coverage of what this might mean for a children's media sphere, except that strictures applied to adult publishing are likely to include children's books and shows. For example, *3R's (Respect, Relax, Respond),* a TV show on teenage issues that is screened in Malaysia, is somewhat protected by the patronage of former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's daughter but still is affected by censorship on issues of religion and morality. In 2004 and 2005, episodes with women dressing as men in short drama skits on dating, references to the use of condoms and to marital and premarital sex, and positive allusions to lesbianism were pulled. This is an interesting phenomenon in children's media that invites comparison with other trends across the world. For example, the children's film *Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005) was prereleased in special nontheatrical arrangements to evangelical Christian churches in the United States and Australia in an imitation of the successful use of this strategy for the adult film *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

The rise of religion in the media may mark a new stage in children's media use that will be alarming to secular parents, and the ways in which this may further divide and classify the Asian market will be important. It is a workable hypothesis, therefore, that state and religion will either collide on a transnational scale or collaborate with the commercial producers in making media regimes more religious, more nationally compliant, and more global as powerful belief systems and media empires get together in search of the next generation.

Now, the other narrative that challenges this story is that of the rise of the *prosumer*, a term coined by Stuart Cunningham at a forum sponsored by the Academy for the Humanities in Canberra, Australia, in 2005. A prosumer is an online child who surfs freely and uses the media not just to consume but also to show creative literacy through interactive software, design tools, and in conversations with people and ideas at his or her own desktop or wireless-enabled laptop. *Creative literacy* is a key concept deployed by the ARC Cultural Research Network in Australia to describe active consumers in a productive relationship with the media industries, particularly interactive software. The prosumer sidesteps the mass-produced product and makes his or her "own" content. This antidote to sophisticated indoctrinations is highly suggestive but is not likely to apply as a necessary example of liberatory prosumerism if we apply it to many Asian economies and regulatory regimes. After all, media consumers can download only what is available within the firewall created by the media regime in which they live and within the context of their income, their education, and the cultural possibilities of their own upbringing.

Although some researchers are skeptical about the extent to which prosumerism affects the media use of young people in Asia, there is evidence in China that young teenagers' use of the Internet for group chat rooms and the exchange of information ties them to larger affective generational groupings that challenge institutional controls at the level of family, education, and the state. In a survey conducted through the Chinese Academy of the Social Sciences by the Young People Research Unit, children noted that they loved the Internet because it helped them make friends. Of course, making friends is not a necessary precursor to innovative use of the media, but it does point to a new ease in a virtual communicative sociability that will enliven political possibilities in the long term.

The effects of media on young people are not necessarily political, however. Much of the Western debate on effects has concentrated on how media violence confuses and misleads children. This is a valid area of inquiry, given the extreme desensitization made possible not just through Hollywood aggression and the games industry but also by the evening news. Yet, a Western perspective should acknowledge that much activity has been prompted by the effects of adult violence in the real world on children's behavior, with adults taking only mediated responsibility for the outcomes. In other words, mediated fantasies of violence may be blamed or even scapegoated for antisocial behavior in the young, when perhaps domestic gun cultures and sanctioned state aggression at home and abroad may also be appropriate sources of concern. This is less of an issue in Asia, perhaps because the separation of real and imagined violence is differently understood. Although there is violence in Asia, as everywhere else, it is not yet usual to blame television or movies for its prevalence among younger people. Fantasy is understood as fantasy and is discussed in those terms. Historical violence is not thought of as problematic either, and connections are not made between a street brawl and a war film. Japanese anime is violent but also highly stylized, and the only violence on Chinese children's television is seen on reruns of revolutionary (and usually rather out-of-date) films.

Media effects as a concern in Asia are not couched mainly in terms of violence, but the concern is nonetheless expressed in relation to the effects of excessive advertising on children. Not much regulation exists in Asia specifically to protect children from the blandishments of food merchandisers, toy manufacturers, and the like, and—as the child market becomes richer and more easily targeted through specific programming—advertising and its putative effects on children's consumption are likely to increase.

The current field of study in children's media and communications has been greatly assisted by the work of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), a Singapore-based Asia research communications center whose impact on the regional field continues to be substantial. AMIC has insisted on acknowledging the specific and local issues in the study of media in Asia and has brought together experts in communications across the region for conferences, publications, and debate. The group has taken up such important issues as children's Internet usage, children's media access, and children's social education. Arguably, their work has inspired international presses to take Asia seriously as a regional player in the world's media. The other important sources for potential study are the market research agencies, state statistical bureaus, and Web indexes of the merchandising sites.

Determining the number of children who go online, watch television, buy media-related merchandise, further their educations through distance learning programs, or use other media resources is an expensive project. Such information is valuable to industry because Asian children with access to media are a valuable and increasingly affluent target market. However, scholars in the media field also need to pay attention to those who do have neither access nor disposable income. Many millions across the continent—the rural poor, those dispossessed through class, caste, or gender—are not counted, and it is their differentiated media use, their truncated communicative opportunities, and their diminished possibilities of individual and communal development that should concern scholars of the field.

—Stephanie Hemelryk Donald

See also Japan, Media in; Media, Future of; Media Education, International; Television, Prosocial Content and; UNESCO Violence Study; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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ATTENTION-DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

The idea that television viewing shortens children's attention spans has been advanced for some time. References to the television as "the idiot box" or "the boob tube," or to children becoming zombies in front of the television, have popularized the notion that exposure to television inhibits children's ability to concentrate. Do these popular conceptions have any merit? Does television really lead to poor concentration, and, if so, what is it about television that causes such problems? This entry examines how television might influence the way the brain develops from the earliest ages and what role this influence has on children's capacity to pay attention. A number of studies have found an association between television viewing and attentional problems; however, few of these are

experimental studies. Data supporting the hypothesis that television viewing can shorten children's attention spans are inconclusive but highly suggestive, but ongoing research will hopefully clarify the relationship.

THE RISE OF ATTENTION-DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Over the past 20 years, there has been a tenfold increase in the diagnosis of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD, or sometimes just ADD), and it has become the most common behavioral problem in the United States, currently estimated to affect somewhere between 8% and 12% of children. Whether this increase represents a true increase in frequency of occurrence of the disorder or merely reflects an increase in its recognition is not known, but it almost certainly involves both. Some have hypothesized that the increasing use of television by younger and younger children has contributed to the rise in the prevalence of attentional problems. These concerns date back to the early 1970s and were based largely on anecdotal experience with little scientific backing. In summary, the data that television viewing can shorten children's attention spans is inconclusive but highly suggestive. It is hoped that ongoing research will clarify the relationship, but in the meantime, parents should minimize the amount of television their children watch in the first 3 years of life.

THE CRITICAL FIRST 3 YEARS

The first 2 to 3 years of life are critical periods for the development of young children's brains. During this time, the connections between brain cells (neurons) form at a very rapid pace. These connections, or synapses, can be thought of as the wiring of the mind, and they form the basis for the processing of thoughts. Consider that the average newborn human brain weighs about 333 grams. By age 2 years, it has tripled in size and weighs almost a kilogram. By age 7, it weighs about 1,200 grams, or 90% of the size of an adult brain. This rapid growth, especially in the first few years, happens in response to external stimuli. When we are born, our brains are not fully developed. Because the fine tuning in brain development happens outside the womb, it can be maximally adapted to the world in which we live.

Scientists have shown that newborn rat pups exposed to different levels of visual stimulation have dramatic differences in the architectures of their brains. In fact, if they are not exposed to light for a long enough period of time after birth, they will be permanently blind. Thus, there is reason to believe that the types, frequencies, and intensity of early stimulation may have profound affects on the developing minds of infants. Given the fact that young children spend more time watching television than in any other single activity besides sleep, there is ample opportunity for television to exert a powerful influence on those developing minds.

TELEVISION VIEWING AND ATTENTION

One of the central ways television succeeds in maintaining the gaze of very young children is through the *orienting response*. First described in 1927 by Ivan Pavlov (best known for his work with dogs), the orienting response can be thought of as the "What's that?" reflex. Simply put, it is a manifestation of our brain's keen interest in something new or unexpected. It is easy to see why this is (and more importantly was) critical to humans' survival. A new sight or sound could be a sign of imminent danger, and the human brain evolved to give that input instant, undivided attention until it could be reassured that the new stimulus did not pose a threat.

Consider now how television might affect this rapidly developing newborn mind that is conditioning itself—truly building itself—in response to the world around it. In contrast to the way real life unfolds and is experienced by young children, television portrays rapidly changing images. Lights flash, sounds blare, and scenes change. The orienting response keeps young viewers transfixed, even though they do not understand the content at all. Parents report that their infants and toddlers love *Baby Einstein* programs, but what they mean is that they watch it intently; they are mesmerized by it.

The concern that this high level of stimulation might adversely affect developing minds led the American Academy of Pediatrics to issue a statement in 1999 stating that children should not watch any television before the age of 2 years. That recommendation was criticized at the time because many felt that data were lacking to support their contention of harm.

TELEVISION VIEWING AND ATTENTION SPANS

Repeated studies have found that children with shorter attention spans watch more television than children

with longer attention spans. This is not surprising to the parents of any child with a diagnosis of attention deficit disorder, who commonly observe that television is the only activity on which their child can focus. Such studies tell us little except that there is an association between television watching and short attention span. It may be that television causes short attention spans, or it may be that watching television is soothing to children who already have short attention spans.

There have been a few experimental studies that have led to conflicting conclusions about the role that television may play in attention spans. The first study, done in 1973 by Lynette Freidrich and Aletha Stein, randomly assigned preschool children in a summer program to one of three television regimens, each of which entailed watching a given show 3 times a week for 4 weeks. The first group watched *Batman,* the second group watched *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood,* and the third group watched other nonviolent programming on commercial television. After the study period, research assistants observed the children in a simulated classroom environment. Children who watched *Batman* were noted to have considerably less tolerance for delay. A subsequent study conducted by Dan Anderson and colleagues in 1977 randomized preschool children to one of three conditions: fast-paced *Sesame Street*, slow-paced *Sesame Street*, or being read to by a parent. The fast- and slow-paced shows were created by culling fast (or slow) segments from several episodes and splicing them together into a single 40-minute episode. Afterward, children were again observed, and their ability to resist impulsivity was formally tested. In this study, although the children in the fast-paced group showed more impulsivity and more diffuse and less directed play than the children in the book group, these differences were not statistically significant.

In another study (2003), Eugene Geist and Marty Gibson randomized children to (a) watch *Power Ranger*, (b) watch *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood,* or (c) engage in age-appropriate play. Again, children were observed after they had spent 30 minutes in one of these activities. In this experiment, children who watched the *Power Rangers* had shorter attention spans than those in the other groups.

How does one interpret what seem to be conflicting studies? First, these are small studies that involve very few children. In statistical terms, this hampers the ability of researchers to detect whether any differences are actually present. Imagine that you were asked to determine whether boys in high school are taller than girls, and you were allowed to measure two of each sex. Although boys in this age range are, on average, taller than girls, with so few in your groups, by sheer coincidence you might fail to detect such a difference. In fact, you might even come to the opposite conclusion. For this reason, studies involving small numbers of children are said to be underpowered and should be treated with caution.

The second major caveat to bear in mind when interpreting these studies is that they were conducted in experimental conditions and on select populations. In other words, the people who participated may not be like other children, and the conditions under which they watched television (and, for that matter, played) may not be similar to other, more naturalistic environments. Moreover, if the true effects of television occur over long periods of time and with repeated exposures, then effects may fail to be detected in such short experiments, which typically last an hour or less.

Third, the nature of the shows that were studied varied tremendously. Commercial programming and public programming may be different in ways that explain the disparate findings. Perhaps it isn't *all* television that affects children's attention, but only certain kinds of television. Or perhaps one would need to expose children to more than 30–40 minutes of television to show significant effects. One final problem may be that the age of the children studied was the wrong age to be looking at. Perhaps, as we noted earlier, the effects of television are more pronounced (and more deleterious) during that critical window of brain development that occurs during the first 3 years of life.

Dimitri Christakis, F. J. Zimmerman, D. L. DiGiuseppe, and C.A. McCarty looked at the correlation between attentional problems and television exposure in a 2004 study of 1,354 children. When each child was 1 year of age (and again when the child was 3 years of age), his or her mother was asked how much television the child watches on a typical day. When the child reached age 7, the mother was asked a series of questions about her child's ability to pay attention, including whether their child has difficulty concentrating or is easily confused, impulsive, or restless. These are some of the core symptoms of ADHD. However, the researchers did not have data on formal ADHD diagnoses, which require input from both parents and teachers.

The study found that, for each additional hour of television that children watched on average during the first 3 years of their lives, their chances of having level-of-attention problems consistent with ADHD

increased by 9%. Put another way, a child who watched 2 hours of television a day before age 3 would be almost 20% more likely to have attention problems at age 7, compared to a child who watched none.

The strengths of this study were that it was large, it was nationally representative, and it used data on television viewing at very young ages. However, because the study was not experimental, that is, because children were not randomly assigned to watch more or less television, it is not possible to be certain that watching television *caused* their attention problems. Indeed, it is possible that the children with attention problems at age 7 already had them at age 1, that they were more attracted to the television, and that their parents indulged that interest by allowing them to watch more than other children.

—Dimitri A. Christakis

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and; Media Effects; Television, Attention and

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B

BEDROOMS, MEDIA USE IN

The bedroom has long been a space in which children and adolescents both retreat and socialize, articulate maturity, and construct identity—and often all by negotiating the discourses of mass media. Whereas children may view their bedrooms as spaces for utility (to play, dress, and sleep, for example), adolescents treat their bedrooms both as safe havens from a world they are only beginning to negotiate as adults and as spaces in which they often have complete control over their surroundings and behaviors. The bedroom is often an adolescent's only private space, and the bedroom doors of teens often are marked with "Keep Out" signs. Conversely, the bedroom can function as a meeting space for socialization among peers, where friends may gather to listen to music, hover over a computer, or simply chat about their lives.

While a child is under the age of 10, the decor and design of his or her bedroom is largely determined by the parents, but from early adolescence on, teens use the walls of their bedrooms in large part to articulate identity and express personal creativity or cultural conformity. Television and film media have latched on to this idea, for example, by taking audiences into the carefully crafted bedrooms of Wally Cleaver of *Leave It to Beaver*, with its model airplanes and pile of homework, and of Seth Cohen of *The OC*, with Seth's homage to favorite band, Death Cab for Cutie. Even *The Brady Bunch* centered entire episodes around bedroom decor as Greg and Marsha Brady hung beads and carefully placed peace signs in their rooms—symbols that they were too old for the rooms of their siblings (which were filled with sports paraphernalia and stuffed animals and dolls) and that they were members of early 1970s culture.

Adolescents' rooms constitute cultures of their own, often rife with symbols of their occupants' gender, age, and generation; but, at the same time, they function as personal spaces in which teens may experiment with decorative taste and individuality. Adolescents use the walls of their bedrooms to continuously construct and articulate identity as they move into adulthood. Their statements of identification depend largely on the mass media and on adolescents' perceptions of what *should* be on their walls and shelves. These perceptions are largely dictated to them by the television shows and movies they watch, as well as the music they listen to (media activities that often take place in the bedroom, interestingly). This may mean carefully placed advertisements of scantily clad models from Abercrombie & Fitch placed next to a favorite childhood stuffed animal, and loud rock music blaring from speakers with childhood soccer trophies on top of them.

Conversely, as adolescents actively construct themselves by what they place on the walls of their bedrooms, their private use of media in the bedroom arguably also shapes their hopes and fears for their lives. In the bedroom, teens often experience media alone, so the media tend to weave together the private and public sides of adolescents' attitudes and identities.

As a station for more active media use, the bedroom is very much an epicenter of activity. As in ages past, the bedroom is a place to retreat to read books, both for school and pleasure, and to flip through the latest magazines. It is a time when youth back away from sharing media with the family—such as getting

together on the sofa to watch a favorite television show—to privately and individually consuming media, especially if it is possible to do so in the sanctuary of the bedroom. Through this solitary media use, adolescents may be better situated to cultivate more self-reflective, private personas. The imagery, words, and sounds with which they surround themselves help them make sense of their lives and can offer a sense of stability in their sometimes-turbulent lives.

There are plenty of opportunities for this process of private self-cultivation to take place at this particular time in history, for the 21st-century bedroom is a center for entertainment and technology. According to a recent survey of children and teens between ages 2 and 18, 71% of those surveyed had television sets in their bedrooms. In fact, one in four preschoolers claims to have TV sets in the bedroom. Thirty percent have VCRs or DVD players. More than a third of these have cable or satellite connections in their bedrooms, and 20% subscribe to premium cable channels. Thirty-nine percent have video game equipment in their bedrooms, where they can play the latest games either alone or with friends. Twenty-six percent of adolescents go online daily from computers in their bedrooms. Once online, they may sit in their rooms for hours, sending instant messages to friends, playing games, or buying clothing, and many still talk on their family's land-based phone lines or exchange text messages with friends from their cell phones as well.

As many parents will attest whose children blast their favorite bands as soon as they slam their bedroom doors closed, music continues to be an important factor in adolescent bedroom culture. As many as 84% of 8-to-18-year-olds' bedrooms contain radios, and 86% contain CD or tape players. Moreover, 61% of young people also own portable CD or tape players, and 18% (and increasing all the time) have portable digital music or MP3 players such as iPods that may be listened to on headphones while doing homework, hooked up to speakers and amplified, or carried along when they leave their homes. When both bedroom and portable music devices are combined, 95% of 8-to-18-year-olds have personal sources of music that they access.

The cultural site of the bedroom is seen by many as an important place, both for private time to negotiate identity and as a shared space where children and adolescents may socialize with friends away from the watchful eyes of their parents. And although this space may work as a center for resistance (often against parents and other authority figures), some researchers have raised questions about whether too much media in the bedroom is harmful. A study by the John Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health and Stanford University that looked at more than 400 8- and 9-year-olds found that children with TVs in their rooms scored 8 points lower on math and language arts tests and 7 points lower on reading tests than children who did not have televisions in their bedrooms. Overall, children with bedroom TVs watched an average of nearly 13 hours of television per week, compared with an average of less than 11 hours per week among those without bedroom televisions. It was thought that lack of sleep caused by watching television in bed late into the night may be to blame for the pupils' poor performance; however, the study found that having a home computer had the opposite effect. Those with access to home computers scored around 6 points higher on math and language arts tests and 4 points higher on reading tests. In addition, the Internet proves to be an important social tool in the lives of children and adolescents. Many are able to use it to maintain psychological closeness with friends who are at a distance, but they also use it to manage the social worlds within which they move as they send IMs and emails to their friends from their rooms.

Furthermore, some parents express concern about adolescents and children who spend too much time in their bedrooms using media, and often restrict their media use there. Parents of older adolescents tend to have fewer viewing rules for television, but most children and younger adolescents report parental controls over the amount of time they are allowed to spend watching TV and the content of the programming. Parents are also increasingly vigilant regarding their children's computer usage. For example, in research reported from the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 61% of parents said they monitored their children's online activities, and 70% required them to use a computer in a "public" space in their home, such as the living room, kitchen, or den. These parents worried that their children would be approached online by sexual predators, but others simply did not feel their children and adolescents were mature enough to make sense of much of the information (especially the pornography) on the Internet. Unsurprisingly, research also shows that children who are allowed to have personal media in their bedrooms (including television, radio, and the Internet) also have fewer parental controls over the time they spend with media and over the content of that media.

Adults often worry that having too much media at one's disposal may be harmful in other ways. A body of research based on cultural studies of children and adolescents examines the media as a site where they negotiate attitudes and develop beliefs about gender, race, sexuality, and beauty ideals. Biologists and social scientists also cite the media as an influence on brain activity and biological development. Studies of families with more than two television sets, specifically families in which one of the TVs is placed in a child's room, have shown that children and adolescents who have their own television sets tend to negotiate mediated messages differently from those who share one television set with the family and negotiate the messages with other family members.

Worry is widespread that children and teens may be inundated with too many media messages and too many options for personal communication and entertainment. Another recent study found that 26% of children and adolescents aged 6 to 14 use varied media simultaneously. Although this multitasking may be viewed as evidence of children's sophistication and ability to accomplish more work than past generations, it also is viewed as symptomatic of a generation of youth with short attention spans who are unable to function productively without saturating themselves with media.

However, it is suggested by some that adolescents might have more control over media in their bedrooms than almost any other place they venture, because their bedrooms are their personal domains in which they determine what surrounds them and how they make sense of it. In this view, children and adolescents' interactions with media represent a dialectical process in which media are both amplified and restrained by them. They use their own lived experiences and embodied knowledge to understand the media as a cultural product; they select it, interact with it, and apply it in concrete ways in their everyday lives rather than let the dominant discourses and messages of the media dictate specifically how they feel and act.

It should be noted that young people's media usage in the bedroom varies by race, class, and the educational level of the parents. For example, children whose parents who completed high school or received a general education degree with no further schooling were more likely to have TVs, DVD players, and video game consoles in their rooms, whereas those whose parents had college degrees were less likely to have these media in their rooms. Also, far more young people from lower-income homes report having televisions in the bedroom than do those in middle- or upper-income groups. However, in general, children and teens from homes with incomes above $75,000 have access to more media, especially computers and the Internet. Teens who remain offline and do not have computers in their bedrooms (or homes) often are identified by lower levels of income and limited access to technology, and they disproportionately identify as African American. Furthermore, how children and adolescents understand and react to media in the bedroom also varies by race, class, and gender.

—Shayla Thiel

See also Media Effects; Music Listening, Uses of

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BODY IMAGE, ETHNICITY/RACE AND

Extensive research has linked adolescent media use with body image, typically finding that greater exposure to media representations of the thin ideal is associated with worse body image. Most of this research, however, has been conducted with samples that are exclusively white and female. Recent research exploring the role of

race and ethnicity in the relation between media use and body image has considered how adolescents of color might interact with media images somewhat differently from white adolescents, and how media images convey race-related information about beauty and bodies. Findings indicate that, in some cases, girls of color may be resistant, but not immune, to the detrimental effects of media exposure.

The media have frequently been implicated in the preponderance of body image concerns among adolescents, particularly adolescent girls. Research with white adolescents typically finds that, the more a girl watches television or reads popular magazines portraying the thin ideal, the worse she feels about her own body and the more she aspires to having a thinner one. Recently, scholars have questioned whether these connections would look the same among adolescent girls of color and, indeed, have cited two specific reasons for expecting that they would *not.* First, comparison studies typically find substantial ethnic group differences in body image outcomes. Specifically, relative to white girls, body image disturbances are fewer among African American girls, comparable among Latina girls, and greater among Asian girls. Second, analyses of media images reveal that, in addition to being thin, the mainstream beauty ideal represented by the media is almost exclusively white. Women of color are severely underrepresented on television and in magazine covers and advertisements; those that are included typically have European hair, skin tone, and features. Accordingly, two arguments have been put forth: One argues that girls of color might be protected from the adverse effects of media use; the other argues that they might be at even greater risk than white girls.

Empirical research supports both arguments, although the bulk of this research has been conducted with African American samples. Qualitative data suggest that, compared to white girls, African American adolescent girls resist mainstream media images, describing them as more unrealistic and irrelevant. Although white girls also acknowledge that thin-ideal media images are unrealistic, they believe the ideals are endorsed by people around them and accordingly strive to meet these ideals. African American girls, on the other hand, report rejecting the images as both unattainable for themselves and unimportant to others in the black community. Instead of turning to the media to define the body ideal, these girls turn to family, friends, and boyfriends. Moreover, they report comparing themselves not to white women on television but to black role models and women they know. Although these social comparison processes have not been directly explored among Latina adolescents, focus groups with Latina young adults yielded similar results. Latinas reflecting on the role of media in their development acknowledged that the ideal presented by mainstream media is restrictive, but they argued that they had other outlets for learning about healthier body ideals, specifically their communities and Spanish-language media.

Minimal empirical work has explored associations between media use and body image specifically among adolescents of color. In one study, television viewing was associated with increased bulimic symptomatology among white adolescent girls but not among African American girls. In the same study, however, comparison with and idealization of media images were associated with body image outcomes as strongly among African American girls as among white girls. These two findings suggest that African American girls may be somewhat protected from media's harmful effects relative to white peers but may still be at risk for body image concerns.

Recent work suggests that it may be useful to consider the diverse media offerings to which adolescents of color are exposed. Indeed, certain networks and genres are specifically marketed to African American or Latina/o audiences and largely feature African American or Latina/o characters. These media outlets may provide children and adolescents of color with messages about beauty, bodies, and the feminine ideal that are wholly different from those presented by mainstream media. Indeed, young Latinas report that, in adolescence, they turned to Spanish-language media for representations of a larger body ideal than were available in mainstream media. Accordingly, the impact of these diverse media outlets may not be uniform. Retrospective survey data have documented associations between the body satisfaction of African American undergraduate women and their television viewing habits during high school, finding that these associations varied with the genre of television consumed. Specifically, findings indicate that the viewing thin-ideal images of white women may be unrelated to the body image of African American adolescent girls. Furthermore, regular viewing of black-oriented television may be associated with *healthier* body image among African American girls.

Currently, no comparable research exists examining the role of media in the body image development

of boys of color, nor examining these processes in girls of other ethnic groups.

—Deborah Schooler

See also Body Image in Boys and Young Men; Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Food Advertising, Gender, Ethnicity, and Age

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BODY IMAGE IN BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

Body image problems and disorders traditionally have been associated with girls and women, and the existing literature has focused on adolescent and young girls. This may be due to the fact that most males do not admit or acknowledge that they have problems or issues with their personal body images. Moreover, the literature that does exist on males and body image is inconsistent and sporadic. Yet, in recent years such issues among males have become more prevalent, and researchers have begun to focus on males as subjects of body dissatisfaction.

Defined as "a multidimensional construct that represents how individuals think, feel, and behave with regard to their own physical attributes" (Muth & Cash, 1997, p. 1438), body image involves two components: (1) body image evaluation, identified as the evaluation of an individual's thoughts and beliefs about his or her physical appearance; and (2) body image investment, identified as behaviors an individual performs to manage or enhance his or her physical appearance (Cash & Szymanski, 1995). According to the American Psychiatric Association, body dissatisfaction is *not* defined as the inability to accurately perceive one's figure or body size, nor is it defined as the connection between physical shape or size and self-worth; these are definitions and symptoms of eating disorders. Rather, body dissatisfaction consists of negative feelings or attitudes about these characteristics.

Such discontent is becoming more prevalent among adolescent boys and young men. Research has shown that 50% to 70% of teenage boys want to change their body sizes or shapes. Males who are involved in athletic activities, who are struggling with sexual identity, or who are overweight or obese are more likely to experience body image and dissatisfaction issues. Generally, underweight and athletic boys desire to "get bigger" or increase muscular density, whereas overweight boys desire to lose weight. This is different from adolescent girls, who strive for slimness and weight loss. Additionally, although a high percentage of females are dissatisfied with their body shapes, such dissatisfaction among boys is less common and appears to be unrelated to body weight. Females are typically unhappy with the lower body, whereas boys are more dissatisfied with the stomach.

In terms of athletics and body image, boys and young men involved in sports in which lean and smaller body types are preferred typically also have higher levels of body dissatisfaction. The most common sports that concentrate on body weight and size are wrestling, swimming and diving, track and cross-country running, cycling, and gymnastics. These activities place a high priority on low body weight and low body fat, leading some male athletes to engage in dangerous behaviors, such as laxative use, excessive exercise, calorie and fluid restriction, self-induced vomiting, and starvation, in order to achieve a set weight or qualify for a specific weight class. Such expectations lead adolescent boys and young men to internally compare their actual body sizes and shapes to the ideal physique; the discrepancies cause distress and body dissatisfaction. A 1997 study by Parks and Read found that adolescent football players were more satisfied with their bodies than adolescent cross-country runners were. The researchers stated that this difference could be because the body images of football players were closer to the mesomorphic male ideal.

Although considerable research has placed a spotlight on society's ideal for the female form, little research has been conducted on the possible ideal body for males. Murray, Touyz, and Beumont tested for the male ideal and found that 72% of the male and female research participants believed that society has an ideal body shape for males. The participants were then asked to elaborate on the ideal; 74% stated that the ideal was of a muscular form, whereas only 8%

stated that it was slim. Another study, from Thompson and Tantleff, focused on muscular and slim body shapes and asked participants what messages each represented. The muscular form was seen to be more assertive, sexually active, confident, popular, and athletic, whereas the slim figure was seen as lonely and depressed. Such assumptions about specific male forms are perpetuated or enhanced by current fitness and health magazines, which depict the strong, muscular, "six-pack abs" prototype on the cover and throughout the magazine.

Adolescent boys and young men are bombarded with as many messages and visuals of ideal body types as women are. Ideals are plastered on magazine covers and on the television and movie screens, and expectations are verbalized by parents, coaches, girlfriends, and peers. Other studies, from Sommers-Flanagan, Sommers-Flanagan, and Davis and from McCabe and Ricciardelli, have shown that such cultural messages increase body image issues and disorders among boys.

Body dissatisfaction is commonly coupled with other problematic issues and disorders, such as body dysmorphic disorder, depression, low self-esteem, bigorexia, and anorexia and bulimia. The rate of occurrence of eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia), in males is still very low compared to that in females—of the estimated 8 million individuals diagnosed with eating disorders, 10% to 15% are males. However, specific prevalence rates among men are more difficult to determine and may be higher than reported because of the hidden nature of eating disorders and the false perception that eating disorders are found solely in females. Moreover, the societal stigma surrounding eating disorders is that of secrecy and shame; as a result, males with eating disorders often go to great lengths to hide their conditions.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, the primary ages for the onset of eating disorders for both males and females fall between 14 and 26 years, peaking at 14 to 18 years. Yet there is no compelling evidence that body image issues and dissatisfaction directly lead to disordered eating among adolescent boys.

Another disorder commonly associated with body image is *body dysmorphic disorder*, which is defined as a preoccupation or obsession with a "defect" in physical appearance, whether it is an actual imperfection or an imaginary one. "Defects" could range from a freckle on the neck or a scar from a childhood accident to a large nose or enlarged thighs. This preoccupation can be focused on any part of the body, independent of size, and typically leads to obsession with changing the "defect" by any means necessary. The individual's perception of the "defect" is distorted and commonly causes the individual to be consumed by thoughts of the problem. This usually leads to high levels of depression, low self-esteem, and fear of rejection, and coexists with obsessive-compulsive disorder and social phobia.

A third disorder associated with body image is *bigorexia*. Although not all physicians recognize this disorder, and no medical association has published relevant clinical guidelines, numerous psychiatrists and psychologists have observed and treated bigorexia since 1997. Bigorexia, also known as *muscle dysmorphia* and *reverse anorexia*, is a condition in which individuals are constantly worried that they are physically too small. The disorder is found primarily in the male bodybuilding community, and those suffering from bigorexia will go to any lengths to achieve bigger muscular bulk. They often spend hours in the gym lifting weights, pay obsessive attention to their diets, and are preoccupied with looking at themselves in the mirror. Although the causes are still unknown, physicians view bigorexia as a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder due to the pressure placed on men by media and society to conform to a certain physical ideal.

Overall, adolescent boys and young men are beginning to join females in their dissatisfaction with body image. Males are often distressed that they are not big enough, in marked contrast with females, who want to be smaller and thinner. Young men and young women alike experience low self-esteem when dealing with poor body image, and depression is common. Although body dissatisfaction issues such as dysmorphic disorder and bigorexia have not been directly linked to eating disorders, the connections are beginning to appear in therapy sessions as well as in clinical research. It is increasingly commonly believed that young boys are just as susceptible as young girls to pressure from media, peers, and family and are highly motivated to become what our society perceives as the "ideal" male.

—Andrea Holt and Jennings Bryant

See also Body Image in Children; Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Media Effects

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BODY IMAGE IN CHILDREN

The concept of body image in children incorporates a number of factors, including awareness of one's appearance; perception of one's body shape in comparison to others; beliefs about appropriate or desirable weight, shape, and appearance; self-esteem, sensitivity, or embarrassment about one's weight and appearance; and judgments about other people concerning issues of weight, shape, and appearance. Children's body image is also linked to their actual weight and fitness as well as healthy eating and healthy activity behaviors. Distinct from eating disorders and obesity, body image is primarily perceptual (e.g., how accurately children view their bodies in comparison to others and to a healthy ideal) and emotional (e.g., feelings about their own weight, shape, and appearance).

Media messages may directly or indirectly undermine positive body image by showing unrealistic examples of body shapes and sizes as desirable or normal, promoting unhealthy eating behaviors, displacing activities that involve exercise or other esteem-building activities, and portraying people who are overweight as unintelligent, unpopular, and targets of ridicule. Girls receive more specific media messages about unrealistic ideals for weight and appearance than boys do, and girls are much more concerned about being too fat and about their overall appearance.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BODY IMAGE IN CHILDHOOD

Although there is an enormous body of research and theory related to body image and eating disorders in adolescence and young adulthood (until recently, primarily focused on females), far less is known about the development of body image in childhood. By around the age of 2, most children have developed a self-concept, which gradually expands to include gender identity, racial/ethnic identity, specific physical characteristics (e.g., hair color, freckles), and clothing preferences. Somatic sensitivity (exaggerated dissatisfaction and embarrassment about overall appearance and specific body parts like ears or nose) does not usually show up until puberty; however, sensitivity about weight and body shape has become increasingly apparent at younger and younger ages. This decreasing age of onset for body dissatisfaction mirrors the increase in attention paid to issues of weight and appearance in the mass media and in popular culture in general.

The Measurement of Body Image in Children

Most of the commonly used psychometric scales and other measures of body image for adolescents and adults are not appropriate for use with children. The most widely accepted measures of body dissatisfaction in children involve scales of figures (shown as silhouettes, line drawings, or photographs digitally altered to hold facial features, hair, and skin tones constant). A set of seven to nine figures is shown, ranging from very underweight to very overweight; children select the image that most closely matches their own and the image that matches what they would

like to be. Assessment of perceptual distortions (i.e., discrepancy between a child's perception of his or her body shape and the actual shape) has been most effectively accomplished using video projection or video distortion techniques. Studies have shown very low incidence of perceptual distortions in body image among children, even for girls, until late childhood approaching puberty. Body dissatisfaction, however, is another story.

The Extent of Body Dissatisfaction Among Children

Until recently, researchers thought that children were relatively unaware of their bodies, and that social comparison and body dissatisfaction did not begin until puberty. Studies have now shown that children as young as 6 years old are already concerned about being overweight, and that by the third grade about half say they have been on a diet. The percentage of children who say they "like the way they look in pictures" declines dramatically across the elementary school years, and some studies have found that, among children ages 7 to 12, almost half the girls and one third of the boys want to be thinner. Although there seem to be few gender differences in overall appearance satisfaction and body esteem during early and middle childhood, dissatisfaction with weight and body shape is significantly higher for girls by second or third grade, and their idealized body size becomes increasingly thinner as they move through elementary into middle school. Findings from studies of body image in boys have been mixed; some show that boys experience similar declines in body dissatisfaction as they approach puberty (although they typically want to be bigger and more muscular rather than thinner), whereas other studies show that puberty may actually increase body satisfaction for boys.

Most of the research on body dissatisfaction has focused on Caucasian children. The few studies of body image in girls of color have sometimes shown higher body satisfaction among African American girls than among Caucasian or Latina girls, despite having a higher average BMI (body mass index) and earlier timing of puberty, presumably due to differences in cultural/ethnic ideals for body shapes and sizes. This may depend on the extent to which the child's community is made up of primarily Caucasian or African American individuals; children of color growing up in communities where nearly everyone is Caucasian may be more likely to adopt the thinness ideal of Caucasian culture.

Some research has shown that children's attitudes about weight and appearance extend to their judgments of others. One study found, for example, that even young children are less likely to select an overweight child to be their friend and more likely to identify a thin or normal-weight child as "good" than one who is overweight.

Many factors contribute to low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction, including comments from peers, parents, and other adults; parents' overt encouragement of their daughters to lose weight, for example, is associated with increased body dissatisfaction and dieting among girls.

MEDIA INFLUENCES ON CHILDREN'S BODY IMAGE

There has been very few studies linking media messages to body image per se in children, although there is quite a bit of research linking media use to obesity, dieting, and unhealthy eating behaviors. Until relatively recently, the relationship between media exposure and body dissatisfaction was largely inferred from content analyses of media portrayals and comments by adolescents and young adults about how insecure those portrayals made them feel.

Analyses of Media Content

Media messages about body image come primarily through visual and audio-visual formats, such as TV programs and commercials, movies, magazines, and video games. Of these, only television has been studied to any extent with respect to body image in children. A recent longitudinal study of body types shown in animated cartoons found an increase in presentations of characters who are underweight and a decrease in presentations of overweight characters, coupled with a clear tendency to show more positive messages about thinness and more negative messages about overweight. Content analyses of prime-time programs (frequently viewed by children) have shown an even more distorted "world" of body sizes, with underweight women appearing six times more often than they do in the real world. Overweight individuals appear only half as often as they do in reality, and they are usually shown to be unattractive, unsuccessful, and unpopular. Besides implicit messages about ideal body

size found in character portrayals, analyses of media content have also found frequent explicit messages about dieting, body shape, and the thin ideal. One study of prime-time programs found that 12% of the female characters said they were dieting, and it was common for female characters—even young teens—to make negative comments about their own appearance.

Barbie dolls are also representative of the unrealistic body ideal presented to children; if a Barbie doll were life size, she would have a 34-inch chest but only a 16-inch waist, 6-inch upper arms, and feet only 3-1/2 inches long. Similar distortions occur for boys' "action figures"; the musculature of these action figures has increased significantly since the 1960s, and if today's G.I. Joe dolls were life size, they would have upper arms measuring 26 inches around, 55-inch chests, and feet only 5 inches long.

Somewhat in contradiction to the unrealistically thin or muscular characters children see on television are the foods and eating behaviors found in TV commercials shown during children's shows. Many content analyses have demonstrated that the foods advertised to children are often high in sugar and fat, low in nutrients, and shown in much larger portions than are appropriate for a healthy serving. These high-calorie foods are then shown being eaten by happy, normal-weight (or even thin) children and families.

Media and Children's Attitudes About Weight and Appearance

Much of the research linking media portrayals with increased body dissatisfaction has been correlational or theoretical. One difficulty in studying this type of effect is that the influence of media on body image is almost certainly cumulative over time, making it difficult to demonstrate an effect using experimental methods or to measure actual media exposure over more than just a short period. Theoretical frameworks for studying these effects usually come from social comparison theory, social learning theories, internalization of the thin ideal, and investment in one's own appearance as key to self-evaluation.

Nonetheless, some empirical evidence is starting to accumulate that supports the influence of media messages on children's body dissatisfaction and attitudes about weight in general. One study of first-through-third-grade children found that TV viewing and interpersonal attraction to TV characters was predictive of boys' tendency to stereotype a fat female target, and predictive of increased eating disorder symptomatology for both boys and girls. A large longitudinal study of children ages 9 to 14 found that boys and girls who said they made a concerted effort to look like same-sex media celebrities were more likely later on to report concerns about weight than their peers; this was also predictive of purging for adolescent girls. Another recently published longitudinal study of children ages 8 to 12 found that the strongest predictors of engaging in strategies to lose weight (for both girls and boys) or increase muscles (for boys) were BMI (body mass index), influence of mothers, and media exposure.

INTERVENTIONS RELATED TO MEDIA ISSUES AND BODY IMAGE IN CHILDREN

Attempts to address these issues and influences with children generally fall into one of three categories. The first focuses on decreasing screen time or other media use, thereby decreasing exposure to media messages that undermine healthy eating and positive body image, and possibly increasing physical activity. Studies of this type of intervention have typically looked at effects on obesity rather than body image per se and have shown some success in slowing weight gain in children although not an increase in physical activity. The second type of intervention emphasizes boosting children's general self-esteem and self-expression through facilitated discussions as follow-up to viewing age-appropriate videos (such as those created by The Body Positive) or through teaching children to create their own video documentaries about their lives and coping with weight issues (such as the Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment initiative of Children's Hospital Boston).

The third type of intervention involves media literacy programs designed to help children critically analyze unrealistic and unhealthy media messages about body image and nutrition. Although such programs are increasingly popular in school and community-based settings, more empirical research must be done to document their effectiveness in developing children's resilience to unhealthy media messages about body image.

—Cyndy Scheibe

See also Advertising, Body Image and; Body Image in Boys and Young Men; Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Eating Habits, Media Influence on; Food Advertising, Obesity and; Obesity

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BODY IMAGE IN GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

Mass media such as television and magazines are replete with messages about gender, attractiveness, ideal body shapes and sizes, and weight management. Girls and young women are exhorted to make the attainment of beauty their principal project in life. Since the middle of the 20th century, female beauty in the media has been defined chiefly in terms of a thin body. Consequently, negative body image and disordered eating rates among girls and young women appear to mirror media trends. As media-depicted body ideals have become more slender, the rates of disordered eating and body dissatisfaction among girls and young women have risen. Accordingly, media influences on weight and shape concerns in girls and young women have become the focus of much research.

TRENDS IN MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF THE IDEAL FEMALE BODY

The highest reported prevalence of anorexia nervosa and bulimia, both of which are eating disorders linked with the idealization of a thin body, occurred during the 1920s and again from the late 1970s to the present day. During these periods, the media-depicted body ideal was the thinnest in American history. The full-busted, full-hipped postwar television matron is outmoded, replaced by a slimmer, more independent, active female figurehead, exemplified by characters in media offerings ranging from fitness and fashion magazines to reality-based television shows popular with young female viewers, such as *The Swan* and *America's Next Top Model.*

Content analyses of female body shapes and sizes in popular magazines, entertainment television, and advertising reveal a number of trends. First, the ideal female body has become progressively thinner since the 1950s, reaching a low that has remained fairly consistent since the early 1990s. Second, the body sizes of female models and other media personalities tend to be markedly thinner than the body sizes of male models and media personalities. Moreover, media aimed specifically at young female audiences, such as fashion magazines, feature significantly more diet-related information and advertising than media aimed at male audiences. Third, thin female television characters are portrayed as more successful and more desirable than normal or heavy characters; research shows, for instance, that they are complimented more and insulted less by male characters than are fat female characters. Fourth, the discrepancy between the body sizes of women in the media and the body sizes of real American women has grown. One recent study showed that, as American women have become heavier, the magazine-depicted female body ideal has become slimmer; almost all the female models analyzed in this study were estimated to have body mass indices in the "anorexia risk" range. Thus, female audience members wishing to emulate the thin ideal must employ increasingly extreme measures to do so.

MEDIA EFFECTS ON BODY IMAGE

There is now a sizable collection of evidence that girls' and young women's images of their own bodies are influenced by the mass media's portrayal of the thin ideal. Experimental research on immediate, short-term effects suggests that exposure to ideal-body imagery, articles, advertisements, and entertainment portrayals results in increased estimates of the importance of sex appeal and beauty, decreased body satisfaction, overestimates of body size, increased body shame, decreased self-esteem, increased depression, and an increased drive for thinness. Research also shows that adolescents respond more to social information endorsing the thin body ideal than do adults, presumably because adolescents are highly sensitive about their changing body shapes.

Several theoretical processes have been identified in explanations of how media depictions of the thin ideal affect body image and disordered eating in girls and young women. The first of these is internalization of the slim body ideal. Several researchers have argued that internalization of this ideal—that is, adopting it as one's own personal standard—is a causal factor in the development of negative body image and disordered eating in adolescents and young women. Very recent research with girls in elementary school suggests, however, that media exposure can lead to extreme dieting even before it leads to thin-ideal internalization.

A second theoretical process explaining media's role in body image and disordered eating is social comparison with slim media personalities. Many studies have shown that exposure to ideal-body media such as fashion magazines activates a comparison process whereby girls and young women compare their bodies to the models and actors they see featured in the media. This often results in disappointment in one's own appearance, followed by the resolution to do whatever is necessary to resemble the target(s) of comparison. On the other hand, research has shown that exposure to normal or overweight models can temporarily raise girls' and young women's body esteem.

A third theoretical process explaining media's role in body image and disordered eating concerns emotional responses to ideal-body imagery and the role of emotion in eating behavior. Research on media exposure and self-discrepancies suggests that ideal-body media images can activate existing discrepancies between girls' perceptions of their bodies as they are and as they ideally would like them to be. The activation of such discrepancies gives rise to unpleasant emotions such as depression and anxiety, which then may be soothed through the strategic use and abuse of food.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN EFFECTS

Not all girls and young women are equally affected by exposure to thin-ideal media. Research has identified several moderators, or individual differences, that influence the strength of media effects on body image and disordered eating. The first such moderator is disordered eating itself. One study of the effect of exposure to magazine photographs of thin female models compared eating-disordered and nondisordered research participants. Nondisordered participants were not affected by the images, whereas disordered participants overestimated their own body size by an average of 25% after less than 10 minutes of exposure.

A second, related moderator is perceptions of personal physical attractiveness and self-esteem. One study measured 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-grade girls' responses to advertising and found that the tendency to compare the self to models in the advertisements increased with age and was stronger in girls with lower initial estimates of personal attractiveness and self-esteem. A related study showed that young women who were low "self-monitors" felt badly about their bodies after exposure to images of slender beauty. Low self-monitors are typically less responsive to situational demands and tend to be described by friends as introspective and anxious.

A third moderator is the context of exposure. Media exposure is not always a solo activity; it frequently takes place in the presence of an audience. Comments made by other audience members can influence the effect of media content on individual audience members. In one study, older female adolescents viewed slides of neutral images exclusively or slides of neutral images interspersed with slides of idealized slender beauty. Some of the participants viewed the slides alone, some viewed in the presence of two silent males, and some viewed in the presence of two males who made positive comments about some of the idealized slides. Surprisingly, when males commented, the effect of the idealized images was slightly *more positive* than the effect of the neutral images. This counterintuitive finding was replicated in additional research. It appears that the male commentary made participants conscious

of their reactions to the images. This conscious processing of appearance-related information may help young women activate a critical stance toward sociocultural messages about body shape and beauty.

Most of the research on media effects on body image involves older adolescent and young adult samples. Although the exact role of age as a moderator is still undetermined, there is some evidence that even young girls may be susceptible to the effects of ideal-body media. In one study, greater television viewing was associated with increased eating disorder symptomatology in a sample of 6-to-8-year-old girls. In another study, 9-to-12-year-old girls were assigned to view slides of adult models in advertisements from adult-targeted magazines, slides of young girls modeling in advertisements from child-targeted magazines, or slides of neutral scenes such as houses and boats. Girls exposed to peer but not adult models reported feeling heavier, less happy, less attractive, and less intelligent.

In spite of these findings, there is reason to believe that older adolescent girls are more vulnerable to ideal-body media effects than are younger adolescent girls. A study of Australian adolescent girls ages 12 to 13 and 15 to 16 showed that different characteristics made younger and older girls more susceptible to the effects of exposure to thin, attractive models. For younger girls, postexposure body dissatisfaction was highest for those with a greater body mass and a dispositional tendency to feel fat. For older girls, body dissatisfaction was highest for those with the same characteristics plus the more psychological characteristics of thin-ideal internalization and a tendency to compare their bodies to others' bodies. In developmental terms, growing psychological sophistication may combine with larger body size and a stable concern about being "fat" to render the impact of thin-ideal images greater for older adolescents.

A final notable moderator of ideal-body media effects is race and ethnicity. African American and Latina girls tend to embrace more curvaceous body ideals and consequently display more resistance than white girls to the ultra-thin body ideal conveyed through mass media that target primarily white audiences. Because most conspicuously thin models and characters in American media are white, resistance to this ideal may stem from less social comparison overall because white media personalities are not perceived by girls of color as personally relevant. As more and more models and media personalities of color conform to the ultra-thin body ideal, however, this pattern may change.

PREVENTION OF EFFECTS

Most efforts at prevention have concentrated on teaching media literacy to girls and young women. Media literacy refers to the process of learning about and critically analyzing media institutions, conventions, motivations, formal features, and message structures and meanings. The goal of media literacy is selective, informed, and empowered media consumership; cynicism and blanket condemnation of pleasurable media use are generally viewed as unrealistic and even counterproductive given that girls must live in a media-saturated society.

Research on body-focused media literacy suggests that informational curricula can be effective. One such curriculum began by showing adolescent girls portions of videos featuring scholarly critiques of the thin female media ideal, followed by footage depicting computer retouching of supermodel Cindy Crawford's image for a magazine layout. The girls then practiced critical analyses of media popular with their peers and discussed the implications of the inevitable discrepancy between real girls' bodies and the "perfect" images in the media. Compared to girls who had not participated, girls exposed to this curriculum subsequently reported better body image and less social comparison with media images. The effects of the curriculum were limited, however; there was no reduction in internalization of the slender beauty ideal or in disordered eating.

Longer-term media literacy programs appear to be more useful for effecting durable attitude and behavior changes. One curriculum involving six 90-minute lessons encouraged girls to be activists by helping peers and by working to change mass media to establish healthier norms. The girls in the program critically evaluated advertisements and then wrote letters to businesses to advocate healthier images. These letters were posted on the website of the National Eating Disorders Association to promote activism and advocacy by other girls. Three months after the conclusion of the curriculum, participants were less likely to read teen fashion magazines promoting the thin body ideal. They also reported reduced thin-ideal internalization and increased faith in their ability to be activists and to influence weight-related social norms. Still, the curriculum had no effect on dieting and no sustained effect on body size acceptance.

Given the ubiquity of the slender beauty ideal in American mass media, it is not surprising that even long-term, intensive media literacy programs can only go so far in protecting girls and young women from the effects of ideal-body media. Replacement of these media with healthier options is a different prevention strategy that has been tested in recent research. In a study of women's sports media, white adolescent girls reported less self-objectification following exposure to fuller-bodied female athletes than after exposure to lean female athletes or male athletes. African-American girls, however, reported *more* self-objectification after exposure to fuller-bodied female athletes, perhaps because the shape of these athletes' bodies was a closer match to their pre-existing ideals. This research suggests that, as long as female models, athletes, television characters, and other media personalities are portrayed in a manner that objectifies them by drawing attention to their appearance, exposure to media featuring them may be harmful to girls. At present, it appears that the best prevention may be for parents, teachers, mentors, and other influential adults to encourage the girls in their lives to avoid appearance-relevant media altogether and instead spend their time with media that focus on those aspects of human life—such as hobbies, careers, and relationships—that transcend appearance.

—Kristen Harrison

See also Advertising, Body Image and; Advertising, Gender and; Advertising, Health and; Body Image in Boys and Young Men; Eating Disorders; Eating Habits, Media Influence on; Media Effects

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BOOKS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Reflecting aspects of our everyday lives, books mirror the personal experiences, ideologies, and moral standards of people residing within a particular culture, time period, and social environment. Books written specifically for adolescents afford them an understanding of their changing bodies and social environments and provide characters whose lives parallel their own. Commonly, books for adolescents are referred to as *young adult (YA) literature, adolescent literature,* or *teen literature.* This body of literature, generally written for readers between the ages of 12 and 18, has evolved from a smattering of prudent, low-quality, formulaic books to an extensive collection of radical, high-quality, original novels written by established authors from various cultural and generational backgrounds. In addition, YA literature represents an array of genres that changes with respect to

the new trends in American publishing and book merchandising. Specialized awards recognizing literary merit and adolescent appeal have been created for YA literature by educational organizations such as the American Library Association and the International Reading Association.

CHARACTERISTICS OF YA LITERATURE

YA books guide adolescents through the process of learning the proper social codes necessary to function within a particular culture. Through the use of adolescent characters, YA books present familiar situations encountered by adolescents in their daily lives while also providing problem-solving strategies that help adolescents deal with their personal difficulties. Likewise, the various genres of YA books assist adolescents in their social and moral development. These genres include nonfiction as well as the following fiction categories: realistic, romance, adventure and survival, mystery and supernatural, historical, fantasy and science fiction, and sports.

High-quality YA literature that successfully attends to the angst experienced by adolescents has several recognizable characteristics. First, authors of YA literature must write from an adolescent viewpoint to ensure that readers will identify with the characters. Second, adolescent characters should be free from parental restrictions, allowing them to take credit for their accomplishments. YA books should also be written about a variety of subjects and have fast-paced narratives that complement adolescents' multimedia and multitask lives. Likewise, YA books need to include stories about characters from diverse ethnic and cultural groups, including characters of varied socioeconomic status, race, ability, gender, age, religion, and sexual orientation. Moreover, books for adolescents must be generally optimistic, with adolescent characters making worthy and believable accomplishments that the readers will respect. Finally, YA books should deal with emotions that are important to adolescents—achieving emotional independence from parents, preparing for sex, accepting physical changes in one's body, and developing personal morals and ideology.

BRIEF HISTORY OF YA LITERATURE

Prior to the 1950s, YA literature was characterized by gender-specific series; adventure and Western books were published for adolescent boys, and books with virtuous female characters were created for adolescent girls. From the 1950s to the mid-1960s, series books were replaced by sanitized, formulaic books about teen romance and school life. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, YA literature experienced a radical transformation with the publication of S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* (1967), Paul Zindel's *The Pigman* (1968), Judy Blume's *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* (1970) and Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* (1974). While describing in detail the emotions and angst of their characters, all four of these ground-breaking novels related the real problems and experiences that adolescents face daily. As a result, subsequent realistic YA novels were published, leading to the era of the problem novel from the 1970s to the early 1990s. The prominent theme of these novels centered on the coming-of-age experience of the adolescent characters, a process that requires characters to accept or reject the responsibilities and social codes necessary for functioning within a society. Coming-of-age experiences include such issues as depression, eating disorders, pregnancy, puberty, sexuality, peer pressure, school problems, family relations, drug and alcohol abuse, religion, and ethnic pride. Often, problem novels written between the 1970s and early 1990s addressed a social issue but failed to provide a positive outcome.

From the mid-1990s to the present, authors of YA literature have sought to address the realistic problems faced by adolescents using alternative formats (graphic novels or journal-style narratives) and creative approaches (varying points of view and unique futuristic or historical settings). Current YA books are positively tackling taboo topics such as incest and transgender with clarity and sensitivity while employing harsh language and experiences to present the reality of adolescent life. Acceptance of the alternative or being the outsider is a recurring theme in YA novels. Recent examples of these books are Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999), Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* (1999), Julie Anne Peters's *Luna* (2004), An Na's *A Step from Heaven* (2001), G. L. Going's *Fat Kid Rules the World* (2003), and Craig Thompson's graphic novel *Blankets* (2003).

CURRENT TRENDS IN YA LITERATURE

YA literature has seen various trends influencing the books available to adolescents. The recent trends, according to Michael Cart's monthly *Booklist* column "Carte Blanche," include the following:

The emergence of fantasy as one of the most popular adolescent literature genres

An increase in adult authors–such as Carl Hiaasen, Juliva Alvarez, Joyce Carol Oates, and Michael Chabon–writing for adolescents

The development of crossover fiction novels, such as Francesca Lia Block's *Weetzie Bat* books, that appeal to multiple generations

An influx of "commercial" fiction books, such as Ziegesar's *Gossip Girls* and Cabot's *Princess Diaries* series, which are low in literary quality but high in adolescent appeal

An explosion of graphic novels including Japanese manga

The invasion of international book series like J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter,* Louise Rennison's *Confessions of Georgia Nicholson,* and Eoin Colfer's *Artemis Fowl;* and

The publication of more sexually liberated books such as David Levithan's *Boy Meets Boy* and Paul Ruditis' *Rainbow Party*

AWARDS FOR YA LITERATURE

Numerous awards are given to the author's of YA literature. Each year, the American Library Association presents the following awards and honors to YA literature: the Printz Award, Best Books for Young Adults, Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers, the Alex Awards, the Margaret A. Edwards Award, Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, and Teens' Top Ten. Likewise, the International Reading Association awards the Young Adults' Choices. For more information on these awards, consult www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists and http://www.reading.org/resources/tools/choices_young_adults.html.

—Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Jennings Bryant

See also Books for Children; Intertextuality

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BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

The literary genre *children's books* or *children's literature* generally refers to the broad range of texts published for young audiences from birth to 12 years. From board books to fictionalized novels, the contents of these books are influenced by myriad factors, including the current knowledge of child developmental learning, personal ideologies of the authors and illustrators, social and political cultures surrounding the books' publications, and economic realities within the children's publishing industry. Likewise, children's books reflect society's views regarding moral standards and lifestyle choices. Trends in children's publishing are dictated by these views as well as the corporate philosophy regarding book sales. As a result, issues concerning children's book publication, such as censorship and cultural authenticity, are often raised by literary critics and concerned members of society. In an effort to increase the quality of children's books and to encourage multiculturalism in children's publishing, children's book awards are given by numerous educational organizations such as the American Library Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. These awards encourage publishers to meet quality standards set forth by the award committees, resulting in books of higher literary value that avoid cultural stereotypes and promote acceptance of all cultures.

CHARACTERISTICS AND GENRES OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Various researchers and educators have generated lists of criteria for "good children's literature." Essentially, they all agree that children need books that are accurate and insightful, aesthetically pleasing, and free of stereotypes or negative cultural representations. In addition, children's books should broaden the reader's

understanding and awareness of a topic and should be developmentally appropriate for the intended age level. Books possessing these qualities help children understand themselves, others, and the changing world around them.

Choosing the right books for the right readers enriches children's lives and imaginations as they encounter new worlds, new characters, and new situations through the various genres of children's books. Barbara Peterson (2001) describes the textual characteristics of "good" children's books, emphasizing the literary genres most suitable for each stage in a child's development. Genres of children's books include traditional literature (folktales, myths, legends, and fables from around the world), picture books (board books, concept books, beginning reader's books, picture storybooks, and wordless books), poetry (nursery rhymes, songs, and various forms of poems), realistic fiction (books dealing with mystery, humor, sports, school, families, etc.), historical fiction (books set in past times and places), modern fantasy and science fiction (books with talking animals, imaginary creatures, and invented settings), biographies and personal memoirs (books about the lives of famous people and ordinary people), and informational and nonfiction books (factual books on a multitude of topics, from nature and animals to sports and history). *Children's Books in Children's Hands,* by Charles Temple, Miriam Martinez, and Junko Yokota, provides a comprehensive description of the various children's book genres.

CHILDREN AND BOOKS: INTERACTING AND RESPONDING

Interactions With Books

Children need daily opportunities to interact and respond to texts if they are to realize the full potential of books. Jim Trelease enumerates the many prosocial and developmental (physical, intellectual, and emotional) benefits of reading aloud to children from books, noting that the most successful, well-adjusted, and intelligent adults grew up in families where reading is valued and read-alouds are common. Esmé Raji Codell offers comparable statistics and provides an extensive list of recommended books, arranged by subject and age level, to assist parents in selecting age-appropriate books to read to their children. She describes additional activities that encourage children to interact with books, such as reader's theatre dramatizations, puppetry, storytelling, literature-based cooking, book-themed parties, story writing, and poetry readings.

Responses to Books

Considerable research, particularly in the area of literary criticism, has been conducted on children's responses to books. Scholars are undecided as to which aspect of the reading experience influences a child's understanding of a book's message. Lawrence Sipe profiles the various theories of children's responses to literature, examining the influence of the author, text (book), reader (child), and context (reading environment) on the meaning that a child constructs from a book. Some theories of reader response indicate that the author's personal ideologies, written into the text of the book, influence the message that a child comprehends. On the other hand, textual theories maintain that the text contains gaps that must be filled in by the reader's previous life experiences and intertextual encounters before the reader can understand the message of a book. These theories also assert that illustrations, laden with the concealed ideologies of society, hold meaning for the reader and supplement the meaning in the text. Reader-focused theories suggest that the personal ideologies, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic level of the readers inform the meaning they construct from books. Finally, contextual theories of reader response explain that the reading environment surrounding a child's interaction with a book influences the meaning of the text by imposing the social, political, and cultural demands of the environment on the reader. Regardless of which theory of reader response is adopted, researchers concur that a child's understanding of a book is socially constructed, providing a partial view of the world's past, present, and future.

CURRENT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHING

Industry Trends

As a result of corporate mergers, children's book publishing has recently experienced numerous changes in the types of books available to consumers. Over the past 10 to 15 years, the big media companies have purchased the children's publishing houses, incorporating the houses into their media conglomerate of news and

entertainment businesses. The significance of these takeovers is exhibited in the quality and types of children's books being published. Considerable emphasis on the licensing and branding of book and television characters has resulted in a plethora of licensed-character products. Children's television programs such as *Dora the Explorer, Blue's Clues, Scooby Doo,* and *SpongeBob SquarePants* have all expanded into the realm of children's books with a multitude of coloring books, board books, picture books, and novels exhibiting licensed characters from the shows. Likewise, children's book characters such as Curious George, Shrek, Harry Potter, and Madeline have appeared on the silver screen, apparel, and snack foods. Children's book publishers have also made agreements with toy companies to create books with licensed toy images such as *Barbie, My Little Pony,* and *Transformers,* or to create toys with licensed character images such as those from the lucrative *American Girl* series. Similarly, greeting card companies have contracts with children's publishers for books with licensed characters such as *Care Bears* and *Strawberry Shortcake.*

A successful example of corporate mergers and licensing in children's book publishing is the enduring *Harry Potter* craze. Published in Britain in 1997 and in the United States in 1998, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* has evolved from a single children's fantasy book to a globally profitable business venture that includes multiple movies and licensed products ranging from notepads and barware to clothing and video games. Both children and adults are passionate for Potter, creating websites, chat rooms, and blogs dedicated to the British book character.

Directly resulting from this phenomenon is the trend in children's publishing for the increased production of fantasy book series. Because of the huge success of the *Harry Potter* series, children's interest in the fantasy genre has dramatically increased as they seek more books like the *Harry Potter* series. Children's publishing houses have responded by introducing over 400 new fantasy-themed books each year.

Another trend in children's book publishing, a result of the big media mergers, is the popularity of celebrity authors. Recently, various actors and music artists have published children's picture books as original stories and book-length song adaptations. Examples of these books include works by Madonna, Dolly Parton, Jamie Lee Curtis, Jay Leno, and Vince Gill.

Two additional trends in the children's book industry are the increased publication of bilingual picture books and the introduction of beginning-level novels with Spanish phrases and code switching. With the growth of the Latina/o population in the United States, the demand for bilingual and/or Spanish language picture books has dramatically increased. Educators and parents seek children's books that will help Latina/o children learn English and help American children learn Spanish. Also, in an effort to meet this demand for bilingual literature, publishers have launched beginning-level novels that combine Spanish words and phrases within the text and storyline. Code switching—the use of both Spanish and English words without explanation of the Spanish words—has become quite common in children's books in an effort to make them appear more multicultural. An example of this type of beginning-level novel is the *Friends and Amigos* series written by Patricia Reilly Giff. It should be noted that, although the publication of books with Spanish words or phrases has increased, the production of books about the Latina/o population has remained the same, with little emphasis on the diversity of the Latina/o culture.

Quality and Diversity in Children's Book Publishing

The merger of children's publishing houses with media conglomerates has created various issues for the children's publishing industry. Many children's literature professionals and educators have accused the big media publishing houses of focusing on product sales rather than literary quality. Instead of providing high-quality books that will support children's developmental growth and learning, the book publishers are charged with publishing low-quality books, such as celebrity-authored or licensed-character books, that are wholly driven by sales.

Children's literature professionals and educators also maintain that publishing houses fail to produce authentic multicultural literature, because such books do not equate with high revenue. As a result, minority children, who need to see themselves represented in the literature they read, encounter stereotypical presentations (or no representations) of their cultures in their reading selections. Many other issues surrounding the accurate representation of culture, gender, race, sexuality, ability, and religious affiliation are discussed by Dana Fox and Kathy Short in their book *Stories Matter.*

Censorship

Censorship is an additional issue within children's book publishing. When a book's message presents a view of society that is unfavorable or that advocates for anti-mainstream values, it often falls victim to critics who try to censor its contents. Censorship can take mild forms, such as requests that a book be removed from a particular library section or from the holdings of a library. Censorship can also result in extreme measures, such as burning or defacing of books whose messages critics find offensive or potentially harmful to society. Children's books have been censored for various reasons: use of offensive language, particular treatment of a topic, addressing inappropriate or "adult" topics (e.g., sex, drug abuse, violence), inappropriate illustrations, and so on. Recently censored children's books include J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, because the books deal with witchcraft, and Linda De Haan and Stern Nijland's picture book *King and King,* because it proposes acceptance of gay marriage.

AWARDS FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

To encourage high literary standards and the publication of books about various minority groups, numerous awards for children's books are presented. The two most distinguished American awards for children's literature, the Newbery and the Caldecott, are awarded annually by the American Library Association (ALA). The Newbery Medal, originally awarded in 1922 and the first award ever presented to a children's book, honors the most original, creatively written American children's book published the previous year. Likewise, the Caldecott Medal, originally presented in 1938, honors the most distinguished American children's picture book published the previous year. Honor books, or runner-ups for each award, are also recognized yearly. Other children's book awards presented by ALA include the Mildred L. Batchelder Award for translated works, the Pura Belpré Award for Latino/Latina writers and illustrators, the Coretta Scott King Award for African American writers and illustrators, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal for authors whose works have made a major contribution to children's literature, the Robert F. Siebert Informational Book Medal for the most distinguished informational children's book published the preceding year, and the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for the most distinguished beginner-level book published the previous year.

Additional awards for children's literature are administered by numerous educational organizations and include the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature, presented by the national Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs; the Hans Christian Andersen Award, presented by the International Board on Books for Young People; the Children's Book Award, presented by the International Reading Association; the Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award, presented by the Early Childhood Resources and Information Center of the New York Public Library; the NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children, presented by the National Council of Teachers of English; the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children, presented by the National Council of Teachers of English; the Scott O'Dell Historical Fiction Award, presented by the Advisory Committee of the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books;* the Jane Addams Book Award, presented by the Jane Addams Peace Association; and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, presented by Texas State University–San Marcos. The British Library Association administers two other highly significant children's book awards: the Carnegie Medal (the equivalent of the Newbery Medal) and the Kate Greenaway Medal (the equivalent of the Caldecott Medal).

—Jamie Campbell Naidoo and Jennings Bryant

See also Books for Adolescents; Intertextuality; Licensing, Merchandising and

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BOY BANDS

As manifested in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the boy band formula is to combine somewhere between three and six (typically four or five) young, singing and dancing males; to have each represent a distinct personality type; to carefully choreograph their (individual and band) images as closely as their dance steps; and to mass-market them to an audience consisting mostly of preteen and teenage girls. Such bands often play a unique role in the lives of preteen and young teen girls, serving as a bridge between childhood and adolescence. The "boys" in the band (although often significantly older than their tween and young teen fans) may provide "safe" crushes for girls to fantasize about.

New Kids on the Block, New Edition, the Backstreet Boys, *NSYNC, 98 Degrees, O-Town, Menudo, the Monkees, and the Beatles rank among the most famous and successful boy bands of all time. Although they don't fit the standard formula of having been manufactured by an impresario such as Pearlman, the Beatles are considered by many to be the precursor to the modern boy band, notably because of their frenzied reception by teenage girls enamored not only of their music but also of their hairstyles, looks, and unique personalities.

Although the evolution of boy bands can be traced back to the Monkees (and, some would even say, to the doo-wop groups of the 1950s), the modern boy band formula was pioneered in the 1980s by Boston-based music producer Maurice Starr, who at one point managed and discovered (although he did not create) the highly successful New Edition in the early part of that decade. MTV.com calls New Edition the forefathers of the boy bands of the 1990s. The group, all teenagers originally from the predominantly African American Roxbury section of Boston when they hit it big, soon fired Starr when they left his small Streetwise label to sign with MCA. After splitting initially in the early 1990s, the members of New Edition, including Bobby Brown, Johnny Gill, Ralph Tresvant, and the group Bel Biv DeVoe, went on to highly successful projects, while Starr went on to create New Kids on the Block.

Attempting to recreate his New Edition success, Starr created a new group, this time with white teens. The new group, New Kids on the Block, like their boy band successors, appropriated and adapted African American performance, vocal, and dance styles. Moreover, the New Kids' success was a function of MTV exposure, which provided a visual venue by which to market musical acts who might not have been able to get by on questionable musical talent alone. The New Kids sold millions of albums in the late 1980s and very early 1990s. While their fame was short lived, they left behind the formula for boy bands of the 1990s. The late 1990s were the heyday of boy bands. They dominated the charts and MTV airplay and received extensive media coverage.

Seeing the success of New Kids and recognizing the money to be made by managing such an act, Florida-based entrepreneur Louis Pearlman, arguably the best-known boy band manager, held open auditions in 1993 for the group that was to become the Backstreet Boys. After the group had toured small venues such as high schools and Sea World for 2 years, Pearlman sent them to Europe, where they became a huge hit, with Top Ten singles in almost every European country. Returning to the United States in 1997 with the re-release of their debut album *Backstreet Boys*, the band hit it big. The album, which came in at number three for the year, went on to sell 27 million copies and spawned five hit singles. Released in the summer of 1999, the Backstreet Boys' second U.S. album, *Millennium*, debuted at number one, selling over a million copies in its first week alone.

While still working with the Backstreet Boys, Pearlman went on to create rival boy band *NSYNC in 1996, which became almost as successful as its predecessor. Not stopping there, Pearlman created other boy bands, including O-Town, a band whose genesis was documented in an ABC reality series *Making the Band*—a successful series of programs that celebrated the prefabricated nature of such boy bands.

Most boy bands end up fizzling out or splitting up, often in a legal wrangle with their creators or managers. But they were never designed to be more than flashes in the pan, as their fickle fan base moves on to the next big thing or simply outgrows the boy band phase.

Although boy bands have become a cornerstone of girl culture, men in general and male music critics alike have criticized boy bands. Some scholars suggest that the entrenchment of the bands in girl culture has generated this backlash. For example, Gayle Wald locates this animosity within a broader, long-standing cultural devaluation of all things feminine, notably music enjoyed by teenage girls (derisively labeled "teenyboppers"). It is, she says, part and parcel of "a misogynist contempt for girls and girls' pleasure" (Wald, para 31). In this case, she argues, it is the "girlish masculinity" enacted by these bands that accounts both for their popularity with preteen girls and for the derision heaped on them by males in general and male music critics in particular.

—Sharon R. Mazzarella

See also Fan Cultures; Media Celebrities; Music Genres, Pop/Rock; Music Listening, Gender Effects on

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BRANDING

Branding is defined as the use of a name, term, symbol, or design to identify an organization, product, or service. The brand name Nike, for example, refers to the goddess of victory, while the swoosh logo is meant to convey speed and movement. Now the world's largest sports and fitness company, Nike was initially known for producing shoes for track events. A key competitor, Reebok, is named for an African gazelle, a species known to be powerful jumpers, very fast and graceful. The Adidas brand name is derived from the first three letters of the first name and surname of Adi Dassler, who was the company's founder. Several corporate brand names reflect the founder(s) and heritage of the company (e.g., The Walt Disney Company and Kellogg). Studies reveal that children at early ages can readily recognize and identify product logos, although some research indicates that brand recognition increases with age.

BRAND NAMES

Effective brand names are often short and simple; easy to spell, read, and pronounce; pleasant-sounding, distinctive, and memorable (easy to recognize and remember); timely (unlikely to become out of date); legally available for use (not in use by another firm); and applicable to multinational purposes. World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), for example, was formerly known as World Wrestling Federation Entertainment and utilized WWF as an acronym, but the media and sports entertainment company was prompted to consider a new name and logo after the World Wildlife Fund prevailed in a United Kingdom court case in which was alleged the possibility of confusion in the marketplace with both organizations using the acronym WWF. As companies enter international markets, it is important to be mindful of how particular brand names translate into other languages. Gerber, the world's best known manufacturer of baby

Many popular novelty products feature beer themes and brand logos. Budweiser appears especially frequently on such merchandise, which ranges from the six-pack bank shown here to toy trucks, basketballs, apparel, and kitchen accessories.

food, is a corporate name that reflects the company's founders; however, a significant consideration when introducing their products to French-speaking nations was that the French word *gerber* means "to vomit."

A good brand name also commonly suggests something about the product's benefits, is adaptable to packaging and labeling needs, and will be appropriate for new products that may be added as line extensions at a later date. Many brand names are fairly descriptive about the product being identified (e.g., OFF! insect repellent and Toys 'R' Us). Although Dunkin' Donuts is a highly memorable brand name, the corporate identifier potentially could prove limiting if the company later became better known for other food products.

LOGOS

The logo is the visual element used to define a firm or brand. Common objectives in the design of logos are (1) a highly memorable style, (2) identification of the company's product, and (3) boldness, simplicity, and ease of reading. For example, the logo that identifies Blockbuster video stores is uniquely shaped, resembling a movie ticket stub, and the capitalized lettering and vivid colors contribute to the store signs' high visibility. Ideally, logos are durable and have a timeless quality. The Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) television network's "eye" motif, in use since 1951, exemplifies both the viewer's eye and the lens of a camera. The peacock symbol of the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) reflects the television network's heritage as the first all-color broadcaster in the United States. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) logo now in use was designed by Paul Rand in 1962 and depicts the lowercase letters *a, b,* and *c* in three circles of the same size framed by a larger circle.

TAGLINES AND TYPOGRAPHY

A branding strategy is also collectively constructed through taglines, typography, characters, and primary and secondary colors. Taglines or slogans are commonly developed with the objective of finding a phrase that is understandable, is memorable, and links benefits or positive images with a brand. A tagline is meant to succinctly communicate the company's message about the essence of a brand. Enduring advertising taglines include "Just do it" (Nike) and "Breakfast of champions" (Wheaties). The use of various typefaces and fonts plays a role in identifying and differentiating brands. Calligraphic writing of a brand name will likely suggest an exclusive product or prestige-oriented brand because calligraphy is commonly reserved for special occasions and events, most notably in wedding invitations and announcements. The "striped" lettering and typeface of IBM's logo conveys continuity, which is fitting for a computer systems company. In 2005, AT&T introduced a new corporate logo in lowercase type to express a more welcoming and accessible image. Highly recognized characters or icons include the Marlboro Man, Ronald McDonald, the Pillsbury Doughboy, and Tony the Tiger. Finally, color can play an important role in distinguishing brands and communicating both imagery and product characteristics. Generally, red evokes strong feelings related to passion, danger, anger, love, sex, strength, and power, whereas gold is the conventional color of money and brings to mind feelings of security, wealth, abundance, and preeminence. Blue is frequently associated with calmness, coolness, introspection, wisdom, and solitude, whereas green suggests nature, renewal, new beginnings, healing, health, and harmony.

BRANDING EFFECTIVENESS

Several principles are considered cornerstones of the effective communication of brand identity or image. Effective media messages are typically repetitive, continuous, and consistent. A message that is highly repetitious over time and across multiple media usually requires a considerable promotion budget. Companies often spend a large proportion of their promotion funds on one or two leading brands (i.e., those that have demonstrated popularity). Although the communicated brand essence may remain the same to ensure continuity and consistency, different symbols may be employed over time and across cultures to remain relevant, contemporary, and appealing to an ever-changing audience.

CHILDREN AND BRAND RECOGNITION

Several scholars and journalists (e.g., see Juliet Schor's *Born to Buy*, Susan Linn's *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*, and Alissa Quart's *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers*) have been highly critical of the commercialization of childhood and the apparent identification of increasingly younger age groups as target markets by corporations

and advertisers. Paul Fischer and colleagues assessed recognition levels of 22 brand logos by having preschool children aged 3 to 6 match logo cards to one of 12 products pictured on a game board. They found that the overall recognition rate of the Disney Channel and McDonald's logos were 92% and 82%, respectively, and that 91% of the 6-year-old children in their sample matched the Old Joe Camel character with a cigarette. Logo recognition was highly associated with age for each of the assessed product categories (i.e., recognition rates were higher among the older participants).

—Timothy Dewhirst

See also Advertising, Effects on Children; Licensing, Merchandising and; Media, Meanings of

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BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (BBC)

Since its origins in 1922, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has grown to include interactive TV channels, radio networks, more than 50 local TV and radio services, and a website. The BBC has made a point of providing a complete range of programming for children throughout its history.

The British Broadcasting Company, as the BBC was originally called, started in 1922, when the United Kingdom's six major radio manufacturers set out to exploit the new invention. Broadcasters were not allowed to advertise but were financed by an annual license fee of half a pound, payable by anyone owning a receiver and supplemented by royalties on radio sales. The first broadcast came from London on November 14, 1922. A month later, John Reith (much later, Lord Reith) became general manager. After supporting the government in its coverage of the 1926 general strike, the company was dissolved, and the British Broadcasting Corporation was formed with a royal charter.

Radio grew during the 1930s, with particular attention to national and sporting events; the BBC also became a major patron of the arts, commissioning music and drama. In 1932, the HQ Broadcasting House in London opened as the center for radio production, as did the Empire (Radio) Service, the precursor of the World Service. Television arrived on November 2, 1936, but was suspended at the outbreak of war in 1939. Newsreader Bruce Belfrage was on air when 500 pounds of explosives hit Broadcasting House in October 1940. He paused as he heard the bomb go off during his nine o'clock bulletin but continued as normal, as he was not allowed to react on the air for security reasons. Seven people were killed.

Peacetime saw the resumption of one television channel; radio provided two national stations and, from 1946, the Third Programme, which featured music, drama and the arts. The Empire Service continued as the External Service, now receiving a grant-in-aid from the government, a situation that continues today with the World Service. In 1955, television ownership was boosted by the broadcasting of the Queen's coronation.

Competition emerged in 1955 in the form of the commercial, non-BBC Independent Television channel (ITV). The Television Centre in west London opened in 1960, and a second television channel, BBC Two, was launched in 1964. By 1967, radio expanded to provide four stations, and color was added to BBC Two.

In the 1970s, the BBC began broadcasting Open University programs. Teletext arrived in 1974, with early Ceefax transmissions (subtitling for the deaf)

coming 5 years later. Facing increasing competition from commercial radio and Channel 4 television, the BBC expanded with new channels. World Service radio was complemented by a BBC World television service, and satellite channel UK Gold helped it exploit the BBC's valuable archives.

By 2005, the BBC provided 8 interactive TV channels, 10 radio networks, more than 50 local TV and radio services, and the BBC website at www.bbc.co.uk. The BBC also runs social action, education, and minority language programs and maintains several orchestras. In 2004–2005, 95.6% of the UK population used the BBC at least once per month, and the BBC's royal charter was expected to be renewed in recognizably similar form to in 2006, with the BBC still financed by a license payable by each household.

Current children's programming on the BBC includes a daily magazine program called *Blue Peter,* which covers a wide range of entertaining and challenging activities (http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/bluepeter). *Newsround* (http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews) is a daily newscast that deals with domestic and world events, reported concisely and without condescension for an audience aged 8 to 14. These and a host of other materials are also carried on the Internet and on two channels available via cable, namely CBeebies for the younger ages (www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies) and CBBC for children and young teenagers.

For the quality and diversity of its output, its veracity as a news service, and its iconic role as emblematic of the nation, the BBC can be described as the world's most esteemed broadcaster.

—Joseph Wober

See also Radio, History of; Television, History of Children's Programs on

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C

CARTOONS, EDUCATIONAL

Although the possibility that television may negatively impact its audiences is the subject of frequent discussion, often without the support of research, less frequently entertained is the idea that television viewing may also have positive affects. The general assumption often seems to be that children are passive and do not expend any mental effort while watching television, but the literature in this area does not support this reasoning. In fact, there is no inherent reason why television viewing cannot foster prosocial and educational skills in its viewers. A number of excellent children's programs and cartoons have been highly successful in teaching young audiences, including *Arthur, Barney & Friends, Sesame Street, Blue's Clues, Dora the Explorer,* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.* Successes of this nature are demonstrated in a 1979 study conducted by Dorothy and Jerome Singer, who found that television viewing among preschool children was positively related to aggressive behaviors except in those children who viewed educational programs such as *Sesame Street, Zoom,* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.* Viewing of these educational shows was positively correlated with cooperative behaviors and other prosocial interactions between the children (such as friendliness and altruism).

Of the educational programs designed for children, the majority have been created for the preschool audience. *Sesame Street* has been the subject of the largest amount of research by scholars, but other programs, such as *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and more recently *Blue's Clues* and *Dora the Explorer,* have also been discussed in terms of their effectiveness in teaching children learning and reading-readiness skills as well as ways to positively interact with peers.

SESAME STREET

Numerous books and articles have been written on *Sesame Street* since its launch during the 1969–1970 season. Since then, the curriculum created for *Sesame Street* has relied on academic research and child development experts as program consultants in order to reach its educational goals. *Sesame Street* was developed for preschool audiences at a time when America was focused on fighting the War on Poverty, and the Children's Television Workshop creators were interested in gaining the attention of poor and minority child audiences who had less access to educational experiences and who stood to benefit most from viewing stimulating programming. Specific educational goals were set to promote cognitive development, and production techniques were designed to maximize children's visual attention. Different ways are used to retain children's attention during educational programs, including *Sesame Street*. Some of these are incorporating humor, cutting between live action and animated segments, and using children's and women's voices during the programming. For example, during an episode of *Sesame Street,* learning to count might be turned into a song and repetition employed to develop memory skills. These types of features retain the attention of the preschool audience and reinforce the skills taught during each episode.

Although *Sesame Street* was evaluated when it was launched to the public, some years went by without further assessment of the program and its impact on the preschool audience. This task was undertaken during the period 1990–1994 by the Early Window Project, a study conducted by John Wright and Aletha Huston and sponsored by the Center for Research on the Influences of Television on Children. In this 3-year longitudinal study, children's viewing habits were monitored through media use diaries, children were interviewed at each data collection point, and researchers administered a variety of tests to examine school readiness as well as math and reading achievement. Overall, those children who were regular viewers of *Sesame Street* demonstrated higher measures of language and math skills as well as school readiness. The children who participated in this study were also rated by their first schoolteachers, and those children who were regular viewers of educational programming were rated higher in terms of willingness to learn and school readiness.

In order to answer questions of long-term effects of *Sesame Street,* a follow-up study to the Early Window Project known as the Recontact Study was conducted by Wright and Huston with psychologist Daniel Anderson. During the early 1990s, this research team contacted participants in the original study, who had been 5 years old at the time of the study and were now between the ages of 15 and 19, to investigate the possible long-term effects of viewing *Sesame Street.* Among those contacted, 87% agreed to participate in the research project—a total of 540 participants. The findings demonstrated positive relationships between educational preschool program viewing and transcript grades in English, math, and science, and also demonstrated negative relationships between general entertainment viewing and the same transcript grades. These associations were much stronger for boys than for girls. Preschool educational viewing was positively correlated with creativity for both genders. This study is of particular importance to the research on educational programming, as it demonstrated the potential for positive long-term effects on school performance.

MISTER ROGERS' NEIGHBORHOOD

Whereas the original goal of *Sesame Street* was to promote the development of cognitive skills in preschoolers, the primary focus of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* was the development of social and emotional skills. This difference resulted in significant variations in production techniques between the two programs; for example, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* incorporated fewer cuts and was edited at a slower speed. One early study examined a group of 58 preschool children who were exposed to *Sesame Street, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood,* or another control program. The children in the study were observed while playing before and after their exposure to the programs. Small positive changes were apparent in the children who viewed either educational program, compared to the control group. Interestingly, the effects of the programs seemed to vary according to the IQ level of the children. Although there were no significant differences in those children with high IQs, children with average IQs who were exposed to *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* were observed to be more cooperative with adults. This was not the case for the children with average IQs who viewed *Sesame Street,* who were observed to be less cooperative with adults after viewing. One possible explanation for this difference is that the faster pace of *Sesame Street* may have made it more difficult for some groups of children to understand its prosocial messages.

Researchers L. K. Friedrich and A. H. Stein conducted a series of studies based on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* during the 1970s. In the first study, published in 1973, 93 preschool children were divided into three groups: the prosocial group, who watched *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood;* the aggressive group, who watched *Batman* and *Superman;* and the control group, who watched nature and animal films. The children were observed during their free play for 3 weeks prior to the viewings, the 4 weeks of the 12 viewing sessions, and the 2 weeks following the viewings. The children who viewed *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* showed numerous positive changes, including longer persistence on tasks, greater tendency to obey rules, and greater tendency to delay gratification. Moreover, viewers from lower socioeconomic classes also showed improvements in social skills such as cooperation and friendliness. Although these effects continued throughout the course of the study, they decreased during the 2 weeks following the viewings.

In a second study by Friedrich and Stein published 2 years later, the research agenda focused on whether children could apply the lessons learned from *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* to their real lives, and on whether the effects would be stronger if viewing was accompanied by lessons relating to the prosocial skills

demonstrated on the show. Seventy-three kindergartners were assigned to view four episodes of the program and receive supplemental lessons in verbal labeling and describing as well as role playing with puppets. In the days following the viewing and lessons, the children's memories of the episodes and their willingness to help were evaluated. Researchers observed slightly more willingness to help in the children who had watched *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.* For the boys in the study, the role playing appeared to reinforce the content of the programs. All the research conducted on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* was found to have positive effects, but the effects were stronger when viewing was accompanied by activities designed to emphasize the lessons within the program.

BLUE'S CLUES

Blue's Clues was developed as part of the Nick Jr. program block designed for preschool audiences in 1996. The program's design makes the fundamental assumption that children are intellectually active and willing to participate when they watch television. Although *Blue's Clues* owes much to *Sesame Street*, updated research and theory, with the help of researchers such as Dan Anderson, pushed the format a bit further and encouraged the active participation of the preschool viewing audience. The development of this program responded to parents' indication of a need—uncovered by Nickelodeon—for educational preschool shows. The main objective of the *Blue's Clues* curriculum is to enhance social and cognitive problem solving by engaging the children with problems during each episode.

Each episode takes children through the process of solving a problem, such as the steps necessary to find a lost item. During an episode, the host will frequently look directly into the camera and ask the viewers, "Will you help?" Episodes begin with the easiest tasks and become increasingly more difficult, so that all child viewers can feel challenged yet successful in solving problems and therefore remain engaged. The target audience for *Blue's Clues* is children 2 to 6 years of age. As one strategy for retaining the children's attention, the program mixes cartoon segments with live-action characters. Another strategy is the repetition of episodes, as each episode is shown for 5 days in a row during the Nick Jr. program block; this has been shown to greatly increase audience participation in the problem-solving segments of the program. In research by Daniel Crawley, Alisha Anderson, and colleagues, evidence from three experiments shows that experience with *Blue's Clues* teaches children that they can interact with television characters and with television programs in general.

DORA THE EXPLORER

Although little research on this program has been published by scholars, in the show's first year the animated series *Dora the Explorer* became the top-rated show on commercial television in 2001 for preschoolers aged 2 to 5 years. The main character of the show is a 7-year-old bilingual girl who lives in a cartoon fantasy world. The program is broadcast weekday mornings on Nickelodeon and Saturday mornings on CBS. The program design used throughout the series is a gamelike map that provides a guide to each segment. Each segment involves an adventure and a specific learning goal (such as counting, problem solving, and occasional use of words in both Spanish and English). Dora's companion, Boots the Monkey, provides friendship, and Swiper the Fox is also a regular character.

Clear directives, developed with the guidance of the program's research team, are incorporated both visually and verbally to help Dora achieve her goals. Although choices are provided, "magic" is often used (such as a blinking arrow) to lead Dora and the viewer toward the correct decision. Pauses are provided after each question so that the children who are viewing can try to answer before Dora says the correct response. This interactive element, designed to stimulate child participation and conversation, is best utilized when children and adults view together. Additionally, the same repetition strategy employed by Nickelodeon in *Blue's Clues* is also used in *Dora the Explorer.*

INFLUENCING POLICY

To the benefit of American children, the FCC was instrumental in passage of the Children's Television Act of 1990, which was not ratified until 1996 and which requires that all broadcast channels show a minimum of 3 hours of educational programming each week. At first, this regulation was only loosely employed, with broadcasters claiming that cartoons such as *The Jetsons* and *The Flintstones* contained educational values; however, many networks and cable channels more recently have begun to air good-quality, syndicated children's programming; some,

such as Nickelodeon, have also begun to produce their own programs. Initiatives of this type have the potential to benefit children tremendously.

—Andrea M. Bergstrom

See also Children's Television Act of 1990; Educational Television, Effects of; Educational Television, History of; Educational Television, Programming in; Television, Prosocial Content and

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CARTOONS, GENDER REPRESENTATION IN

Research focusing on gender representation in children's cartoons received some notable interest in the 1970s, with some follow-up in the 1990s, but it has not received much attention since that time. Current research indicates that gender stereotypes persist, although female characters are shown more often and in a greater variety of roles.

RESEARCH IN THE 1970s

The early research on gender stereotyping in cartoons arose out of the heightened gender consciousness generated by the second wave of the feminist movement. Three such studies were published in the mid-1970s. One of these studies found that many cartoons had only male characters and that this was particularly predominant in "chase-and-pratfall" (Looney Toon–type) cartoons. Typically, those females who did appear needed to be rescued. In "continuing adventure" (superhero) cartoons, females were presented stereotypically and tended to fall in love at first sight. The few female heroines frequently caused trouble for everyone in their paths. "Teachy-preachy" (Smurf-like) cartoons also had more male characters, but the female characters that appeared had more important roles than did the females in other types of cartoons. Overall, female characters were portrayed as less important and less responsible than males. Two other 1974 studies replicated these conclusions about the stereotypical presentation of female characters. One study found that female characters were slender and shapely, and males had 42 different jobs, but females had only 9. Females were never shown in positions of authority, but males were. The male characters were ambitious, competitive, knowledgeable, active, aggressive, sturdy, and bold. Females were passive, submissive, timid, emotional, and affectionate.

Research in the mid-1970s reached similar conclusions, finding that males outnumbered females on Saturday-morning cartoons. The male characters were portrayed in a greater variety of roles and occupations, whereas female characters were portrayed as housewives, mothers, girlfriends, grandmothers, maids, nannies, nurses, teachers, secretaries, waitresses, or witches.

STUDIES IN THE 1990s

Following up on this early research was a series of studies published in the 1990s indicating that female cartoon characters were outnumbered by male characters by four or five to one. A 1993 study of diversity in children's television indicated that adult minority females are invisible and that younger minority

females, when included, are presented as background characters or filler. Comparing pre- and post-1980 cartoons, Teresa Thompson and Eugenia Zerbinos's 1995 analysis of 175 episodes of 41 different cartoons concluded that male and female characters were shown stereotypically in both eras, although more so in the years prior to 1980. Overall, male characters were given more prominence, appeared more frequently, engaged in more of almost all the coded behaviors, and talked significantly more than did female characters. Males were more independent, assertive, athletic, important, attractive, technical, and responsible; showed more ingenuity; were more frequently the victims of both physical and verbal aggression; asked and answered more questions; expressed more opinions; emphasized task more; bragged more; and ordered and bossed others more. Females were more emotional, warmer, more romantic, affectionate, sensitive, frail, mature, and domestic; and more likely to ask for protection, to emphasize relationships, to be rewarded, to be helpless, and to praise. Male characters were never shown as caregivers and had jobs 31% of the time. Female characters were shown as caregivers 16% of the time but had jobs only 13% of the time. Chase-and-pratfall cartoons were typically more gender-role stereotypical than were teachy-preachy cartoons, and females in continuing adventure cartoons were least stereotypical but also appeared least frequently.

CHANGES OVER TIME

After 1980, cartoons tended to show more leads and minor characters of both genders, and female characters became more independent, more intelligent, and stronger; more assertive, competent, hardy, responsible, helpful, and guiding; and answered more questions. Female characters were less likely to complain, to be emotional, affectionate, or sensitive, and to show helplessness. Male characters after 1980 were likely to be portrayed as intelligent, technical, hardy, and verbally aggressive. Post-1980 male characters were also more likely to show leadership and ingenuity, to ask and answer more questions, to emphasize tasks, to express excitement, and to order and boss others. They were less likely to brag but tended to talk more than they had before 1980. Overall, then, significant change had occurred in the presentation of female characters, and some change had occurred in the presentation of male characters.

A 1995 analysis of sex-role stereotypes in children's cartoons in Hong Kong reported that male characters outnumbered female characters by 2 to 1. The female characters, however, were more common in the cartoons produced in Japan than in those produced in the United States or Great Britain. Male characters were more aggressive, rougher, sloppier, and stronger; females were more beautiful and more feminine.

More recently, research has indicated that male characters are still dominant in adventure and comedy cartoons. Male characters in adventure cartoons were more likely to use physical aggression, and female characters across all cartoon types were more commonly fearful, romantic, polite, and supportive. Another study found that, in the children's animated video series *Veggie Tales,* normative, predominantly male characters of nonspecific race occupied positions of authority and were portrayed as persons from whom one can learn important lessons.

The ever-popular Disney cartoons have also been the subject of inquiry regarding gender representation. These studies tend to use qualitative, critical methods rather than quantification and have argued that there has been little change in the gender representation of Disney characters from the early 1930s films to 1995's *Toy Story.* Males outnumber females, and females work in the home rather than outside of it, having little societal power. A recent analysis of Disney's *Pocahontas* reveals yet another model of female submission, however, in that Pocahontas ultimately subordinates her own desires to those of her community. It is argued that stereotypical representations of women have not changed but merely have been disguised. Others noted that *Beauty and the Beast* shows romanticization of men's control over and abuse of women. And a 2003 analysis of images of couples and families in Disney films reports that fathers are elevated and mothers are marginalized; rarely is power equally shared.

Of perhaps greater note than descriptive analyses of gender representation in cartoons, however, is the research that has examined the impact of such representation on children.

EFFECTS OF GENDER-STEREOTYPED PORTRAYALS

Socialization can be defined as a process through which children acquire the behaviors, skills, values, and social norms that are characteristic, appropriate, and desirable in their cultures. The media—through

its characters, storylines, and formal features—are important contributors to child and adolescent socialization, yet media portrayals are often stereotypical in nature. As summarized above, Thompson and Zerbinos found that children's cartoons, in particular, contained male characters who used aggression, demonstrated leadership qualities, and expressed opinions, whereas female characters tended to show affection, to ask for advice, and to engage in routine services. Such gender-stereotyped portrayals have the potential to shape children's beliefs about gender roles.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Sex differences are of theoretical interest because young children are thought to develop sex-typed attitudes, preferences, and behaviors through observations of the world around them, including exposure to media messages. The development of sex typing occurs very early; children 3 years of age can make gender classifications and are aware of many social expectations. For instance, play with sex-stereotyped toys is one of the earliest manifestations of sex typing, with definite preferential patterns occurring before the age of 3. By age 4 or 5, children have acquired stereotyped occupational preferences and expectations.

Researchers working from the perspective of gender schema theory suggest that gender schemas (cognitive structures that guide our processing of information about males and females) help individuals choose behaviors that are "appropriate" for their sex. Social learning theorists suggest that children acquire sex-typed behaviors gradually, through observation of sex-typed patterns in others. They may also receive reinforcement or approval for "appropriate" sex-typed behaviors and punishment or disapproval for "inappropriate" sex-typed behaviors. Cultivation theory posits that the more time children spend watching television, the more likely they are to believe that what they see on TV accurately reflects their social worlds. Consequently, continued exposure to gender-stereotyped media portrayals can have powerful effects on learning what it means to be male or female.

THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON GENDER-ROLE STEREOTYPING

Research conducted over the past 30 years, primarily focusing on television, indicates that repeated exposure to stereotypical portrayals in the media influences multiple gender-role outcomes. Much related research focuses discussion in four areas: (1) examining media's impact on gender-role stereotyping and flexibility, (2) gender-role attitudes, (3) viewer preferences for stereotyped activities and occupations, and (4) gender-related behaviors. In general, frequent television viewing is associated with stereotypical assumptions about male and female activities, traits, and occupations. Genre-specific effects have also emerged, with regular viewership of educational television and programming with nontraditional characters related to greater gender-role flexibility.

Although a substantial body of research examines the relationships between various types of television content (e.g., soap operas, action-adventures, music videos, advertisements) and gender-related outcomes (e.g., endorsements of stereotypes, perceptions of occupations), there is considerably less research examining cartoons or animation, a staple of children's television diets. One such example explored gender differences in children's emotional responses to, liking of, and perceptions of animated entertainment. The participants were 176 children aged 3 to 9 years. Children viewed short scenes from selected G-rated animated movies, and emotional responses and enjoyment were assessed; they were then shown previews from prototypical "female" and prototypical "male" animated movies. Emotional responses and enjoyment were assessed, and children were asked if they thought the movie was "a movie that mostly boys would like, a movie that mostly girls would like, or a movie that both boys and girls would like the same." Facial expressions were also videotaped and coded. In this study, the majority of children perceived the "male" preview (i.e., *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*) as more enjoyed by boys, and few perceived it as more enjoyed by girls. In contrast, the majority of children perceived the "female" preview (i.e., *Beauty and the Beast*) as enjoyed by either gender. While the authors identified confounding variables that may have accounted for these findings (e.g., choice of stimulus may not have been prototypical enough, the movies differed on a host of characteristics), they also suggested that media viewers are more fluid in their interpretations of "female-oriented" programming than of "male-oriented" programming. Other researchers have similarly suggested that male gender roles are more rigidly defined than female gender roles.

PROGRAMMING TRENDS: ADULT-THEMED CARTOONS

Cartoons were once created with young audiences in mind, but this clearly is no longer a necessary viewer demographic. Adult-themed animation, such as *Family Guy* on the Fox network, a program containing a TV-14 rating and themes appropriate for adults, has attracted the attention and loyalty of children and adolescents. Programs such as these also contain information about gender attitudes, preferences, and behaviors, to name a few, yet it is unclear what messages a young audience might take away from this new genre of adult programming.

—Teresa L. Thompson and Ronda M. Scantlin

See also Cartoons, History of; Comic Strips, Gender Stereotypes in; Gender Roles on Television; Gender Roles in Television Commercials

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CARTOONS, HISTORY OF

Although cartoons are typically considered a genre for children, the history of cartoons in the United States reveals a complex relationship to multiple audiences (both adult and child) as well as to the film and television industries. Cartoons have historically used animation to both enhance and challenge popular conceptions of reality and experiences of modernity. Several early cartoons even revolved around tensions between "real" artists and their animated creations, who often sought to break free of their animators' hands (captured on celluloid with the cartoon drawn around it). Animators have often used anthropomorphized animals and unruly children as protagonists eager to challenge authority or affirm existing social values for audiences consisting equally of adults and children.

Additionally, cartoons quickly took their place in the realm of mass culture, forging early and lasting relationships with Hollywood. Successful cartoon characters, imbued with nonconformist personalities that appealed to an American public increasingly encountering anonymous work environments and mass distractions, became stars and were promoted and merchandised as heavily as any popular celebrity. The intense merchandising and often exuberantly violent behavior of many cartoon characters have repeatedly raised concerns regarding their effects on children, concerns that are helping to discursively construct that audience as in need of protection while imposing content restrictions on animation. Ironically, many of the early cartoons to come under fire were only debatably aimed at children. In fact, it was not until the arrival of television in the late 1940s that cartoons began to be separated from other genres and segmented according to industry assumptions about their audience.

CARTOONS IN THE EARLY 1900S

Although cell animation was first trademarked in 1914 by Earl Hurd, it did not become the industry standard until the early 1920s. Prior to this, animation was a very slow and costly process, as each frame had to be hand drawn and 16–24 frames per second shown. Cell animation allowed animators to draw only those aspects of the frame that were in motion, overlaying these transparent cells over static backgrounds.

The first successful animated cartoon is attributed to Windsor McCay, whose silent short *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914) opened to critical accolades. McCay considered himself an artist, though, and the detail and planning that went into his work was not conducive to the development of an animation industry, which took on more of the factorylike qualities that would later describe other commercial art industries (such as comic books).

McCay was also the creator of the popular and innovative comic strip *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (1905–1911), about the nocturnal adventures of a dreaming child. Indeed, many early cartoons were adapted from existing comic strips. In 1915, William

Randolph Hearst established the International Film Service, an animation studio and distribution service intended to publicize and extend the merchandising capabilities of the comic strips owned by his syndicate. Charles Bowers, another early animation pioneer, bought the cartoon rights to *Happy Hooligans* and *The Katzenjammer Kids,* two popular strips, and entered into a partnership with Bud Fisher, creator of the *Mutt and Jeff* comic strip. These and many other early cartoons featured naughty children and out-of-control animals in adventures that challenged social norms. Although inevitably punished for their transgressions, these irrepressible protagonists allowed audiences to take pleasure in their law-defying behavior, acceptable because of the characters' childlike personalities.

One of the early successes from Max and Dave Fleischer, whose animation house would rival Disney's throughout the 1930s, was Koko the Clown (1920). Koko's adventures often began with Max Fleischer's hand appearing in the frame drawing the character, who would then engage in an ongoing battle with his creator. Appropriately, the series, as well as the Fleischers' initial production house, was named Out of the Inkwell, Inc. In every Koko cartoon, the ink bottle served as a figurative prison or womb from which Koko would emerge. In one adventure, Koko grows to the size of a giant and wreaks havoc on an animated New York City while searching for Fleischer (*Bedtime,* 1923). In *Koko the Cop* (1927), Fleischer frustrates Koko's attempts to run away by pulling the camera back to reveal that he is running on a long strip of paper that the artist is turning on a treadmill. While the series drew its humor from exaggerating the public's anxiety about self-determination in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of corporate capitalism, Koko's popularity made the figure particularly appealing to corporations seeking celebrity endorsement. In 1927, Koko appeared in a film sponsored by AT&T called *The Little Big Fellow's Voice,* followed in 1929 by the Westinghouse-sponsored *Finding His Voice.* Both films were designed to sell new telephone and radio technologies to adult consumers.

Further evidence of the adult audience for animation might be found in the success of the Fleischers' non-Koko production, *Einstein's Theory of Relativity,* praised by critics (as well as by the scientist) and designed to imaginatively explain complex scientific discoveries to viewers. Interestingly, the Fleischer follow-up, *Darwin's Theory of Evolution,* released in 1924, was met with considerable controversy and disapproval from the Church, leading to the discontinuance of the series.

Perhaps the most popular silent animation "star" was Felix the Cat, created by Otto Messmer for Pat Sullivan Studios in 1919. Felix became the prototype for animal characters with human traits, which multiplied during the next few decades and included Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny. It is rumored that Felix drew his inspiration from Charlie Chaplin, whose childlike excitement and innocence Felix imitated along with the comedian's famous movements and mannerisms. Like Koko, Felix often took advantage of his animated status to manipulate his surroundings. Felix's tail could stretch and take different shapes at will. Unlike Koko, Felix usually maintained the upper hand and rarely fought his creator for supremacy. Instead, Felix could make reality bend to his creative whim. Charles Solomon estimates that, at the height of Felix's popularity in the 1920s, three quarters of the world's population could recognize the character. A successful line of toys, dolls, and other merchandise was launched in 1926, netting Sullivan an estimated $100,000 a year.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ANIMATION

The years 1928–1941 are generally considered the golden age of animation, thanks in large part to the emergence of Walt Disney and the creative work done at Warner Brothers animation studios. Disney and Warner Brothers were rivaled by the Fleischers during this period as well, whose exclusive distribution deal and later takeover by Paramount Pictures gave them tremendous exposure. The rise of Disney and the decline of the Fleischers has much to do with the imposition of censorship on animation and growing assumptions about animation's intended audience.

Following and eclipsing their success with Koko the Clown, the Fleischers created Betty Boop, the sexually suggestive yet chaste flapper, and her boyfriend, Bimbo the Dog. The libidinous relationship between Betty and Bimbo made many of their early adventures decidedly adult. Fleischers' other success was actually adapted from E. C. Seger's newspaper cartoon, *Thimble Theatre:* Popeye the Sailor. Popeye and Bluto's endless blowouts over the affections of the fickle Olive Oyl made most cartoons featuring these characters little more than extended fight scenes. Yet, the creativity of the animation and the sheer pleasure of watching grown men behaving badly with no

regard for social etiquette made Popeye cartoons crowd pleasers. Indicating their awareness of what made Popeye so successful, *It's the Natural Thing to Do* (1939) begins with the characters receiving a telegram from a fan admonishing them to "act more refined." Popeye, Olive, and Bluto proceed to get dressed up and attempt to have a quiet tea party, but their bumbling attempts at elegance quickly degenerate into an all-out brawl. At cartoon's end, Olive proclaims their retreat to formulaic violence "the natural thing to do."

While the Fleischer brothers reveled in parodic interpretations that stretched the boundaries of reality and the limits of social mores, Walt Disney was moving in entirely different directions. Although Disney's animation efforts trace back to the early 1920s, 1928 marks the debut of the character most associated with the company: Mickey Mouse. Cartoon historians have noted similarities between Mickey, Bimbo, and Felix the Cat. Yet, Disney would take his mouse in entirely different directions. Mickey debuted in *Steamboat Willie,* the first successful effort to combine sound and animation. Disney took cartoons to new heights, beginning with the debut of his *Silly Symphony* shorts in 1929, and culminating in the release of *Fantasia* in 1941, a feature film that visually told the stories of classical symphonic musical pieces. (Disney also experimented with color, signing an exclusive 2-year deal with the creators of Technicolor in 1932, which contributed to *Flowers and Trees* winning the first-ever Academy Award for an Animated Short later that year.) Although *Fantasia* was a flop that nearly bankrupted Disney, it is the key to understanding Disney's conception of his audience in classed and parental terms. The film subsequently gained a huge cult following through rereleases and the advent of video.

Even though Mickey Mouse was incredibly popular and heavily merchandised to children (by 1931, there were already an estimated 1 million members of the Mickey Mouse Club), the Disney promotional machine also went out of its way to stress the mouse's adult devotees as well, who included such luminaries as Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Benito Mussolini. As Mickey's popularity grew, his adventures became tamer, and he eventually became a "straight man" for other Disney characters. In 1935, Mickey was proclaimed an international symbol of goodwill by the League of Nations. The careful management of Mickey's image as both appealing to adults and safe for children (Disney proclaimed the character "so simple and uncomplicated, so easy to understand that you can't help liking him") was quite different from the Fleischers' promotion of the irreverent Betty Boop and Popeye characters.

Mickey's merchandising mania was both a sign of the character's appeal and of Disney's need for revenue. Disney's studio created the most expensive cartoons in the business, emphasizing a painstakingly realistic animation style that required employing hundreds of cartoonists and took far longer to produce than the works of his competitors. In an era in which a 6-minute cartoon cost, on average, $5,000 to $7,000, Disney's shorts came in at between $37,000 and $50,000. Foreseeing changes in how cartoons were exhibited, Disney set out to create the first full-length animated feature in 1937, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,* at a cost of $8 million. Disney also established a 3-year production schedule for his subsequent features (*Pinocchio* [1939], *Fantasia* [1940], and *Bambi* [1941]), which allowed high production values but also placed the company in tremendous debt as it shrugged off short-term profits in favor of long-term success. *Snow White* also fit Disney's grandiose vision of creating high-quality animation that stressed both realism and lyricism. Disney films aimed to be high art rather than social parody. *Snow White* was one of the first to sustain a coherent narrative from start to finish (most cartoon shorts relied on a series of gags).

The third most successful animation house of the golden era was run in house by Warner Brothers Studios and featured the talents of Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, and Mel Blanc. Their creations were also derivatives of the successfully anthropomorphized Felix the Cat, and their short series, *Looney Toons*, was a direct attempt to build on Disney's *Silly Symphonies* success. However, Warner Brothers' cartoons were often far more willing to poke fun at both high and low culture than those of either Disney or Fleischer. Their shorts were highly intertextual and self-referential. Although such elements existed in cartoons prior to Warner Brothers', their high profile and established distribution network allowed characters like Porky Pig, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and others to gain national notoriety. Like Disney, Warner Brothers intended its cartoons to appeal to both children and adults, combining gags with pop culture references that stimulated audiences on multiple levels. Disney used high art aesthetics with fairy-tale stories to achieve a similar effect.

Until the late 1940s, most Hollywood films were released through vertically integrated studios that controlled production, distribution, and exhibition networks. To keep their theaters in constant supply and to attract audiences during the Depression, most studios supplied their theaters with double features and other short materials, which included newsreels, serials, B-Westerns, and cartoons. Most animation studios were either directly under studio control or had exclusive distribution deals with them. However, in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *United States v. Paramount Pictures* (also known as the Hollywood Antitrust Case of 1948) that vertical integration was a form of monopoly. The ruling forced the studios to divest themselves of their exhibition networks. This separation of the studios from the movie theater chains led to a drastic reduction of materials produced.

TELEVISION CARTOONS

The *Paramount* verdict led to the closure of many animation studios that could no longer find distribution and exhibition networks for their products. Others switched media and began focusing their attention on the emergent technology of television. In fact, the majority of early television cartoons were simply recycled movie shorts clipped together around an enigmatic host. Although the format was first introduced by Van Beuren Productions in the early 1940s, which syndicated their catalog of cartoons to independent stations, the bigger studios did not jump on board until the early-to-mid 1950s. Still, the immense need to fill broadcast hours and the proven track record of these materials eased the transition. Characters such as Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny, and Popeye, although not originally created for television, found renewed (and larger) audiences there than they had in movie theaters. In economic terms, it made sense to recycle these shorts onto television. Disney used Mickey Mouse cartoons as filler and as attraction for his television series *Disneyland.* The cartoons sold the series, and the series, in turn, served mostly as a promotion for the development of the theme park.

Of course, television functioned somewhat differently than had motion pictures. Whereas films had to assemble a collage of materials designed to appease entire families, television could designate specific hours of the day to show cartoons. Although Betty Boop and Popeye were often censored more heavily under FCC regulation than they had been in movie theaters, the changes were not so much in terms of content as in the ghettoization of cartoons. The scheduling of cartoons reflected the assumption that children were the primary audience for cartoons.

New materials for television did not follow Disney's lead in terms of naturalistic aesthetics. The need to produce quickly and cheaply, coupled with the influence of abstract expressionism in post–World War II art, led to an animation style that emphasized flattened perspectives, abstract and minimalist backgrounds, limited and oft-repeated character movement, and fewer individual frames per second. Moreover, television cartoons demonstrated the medium's radio heritage by placing greater emphasis on dialogue than on visual storytelling, often using dialogue to reinforce a visual pun. United Productions of America led the way with the introduction of Mister Magoo in 1949, again into syndication. The first network-produced, made-for-TV cartoon was *The Ruff and Reddy Show,* which debuted in 1957. It was the first project of Hanna-Barbera Studios and is considered the first Saturday-morning cartoon.

Although television contributed to the segmentation of cartoon audiences, it would not be long before the genre's adult potential would be exploited. Hanna-Barbera's *The Flintstones* debuted in prime time on ABC in 1960. Although it presaged the contemporary appeal of adult-oriented animation on television, its success must also be situated within the larger historic appeal of cartoons to multiple audiences. Although set in the Stone Age, the series' characters drew inspiration not from contemporary American families but from their representation on television in the series *The Honeymooners* (1955–1956). In this regard, it might be argued that the appeal of the series lay simultaneously in its nostalgic recalling of a golden-age television series and in its parodic undermining of it, which simultaneously reinscribed and questioned the "normalcy" of the American nuclear family. The series was also the first continuous, 30-minute animated television series.

Although *The Flintstones* appealed to adults, it was also successfully merchandised to children (the show's multiple audience appeal is evident in the ease with which it switched over to a Saturday-morning slot on NBC in 1967 following its prime-time run on ABC from 1960 to 1966). In fact, one of the earliest controversies involving children and television animation centered around the commercials selling Flintstones vitamins that accompanied the series. The

argument that children could not distinguish the ad from the series led to the pulling of the spots, although the Flintstones continued to sponsor other products, including breakfast cereals and clothing lines. Adding to the confusion about where the show ended and the commercial began was *The Flintstones*' simultaneous appeal to both children and adults. At around the same time that Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble were hawking children's vitamins, they were also acting as animated spokespeople for Winston cigarettes.

With FCC deregulation in the 1980s, Saturday-morning cartoons became sources of even greater controversy among parents, who feared both their excessive commercialization and their violence. Series like *Strawberry Shortcake* (1981–1984), *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* (1983–1985), and *The Pac-Man/Donky Kong Hour* (1982–1984) took the established merchandising strategies of previous cartoons and turned them on their heads. Each series was developed after an existing product line had already been developed and explicitly used the cartoons to introduce new toys, costumes, and other commodities. Additionally, accusations soared that cartoons were becoming increasingly violent in their content. This is certainly a supportable allegation, given the popularity of shows such as *G.I. Joe* (1985–1986) and *The Transformers* (1984–1987) during the 1980s, series that featured war as their central theme and centered around remarkably deathless destruction (*G.I. Joe* cartoons featured the destruction of several fighter jets in every episode but always showed the pilot parachuting to safety).

CONTEMPORARY CARTOON PROGRAMMING

In 1989, *The Simpsons* (1989–) made its prime-time debut, spinning off from *The Tracey Ullman Show.* The series is a flagship for the Fox television network and marked the wide-scale emergence of adult-oriented animation on television in general. Far more referential and intertextual than their predecessors, contemporary prime-time animation shows have been more willing to overtly court controversy and challenge established values than have previous incarnations. Series such as *South Park* (1997–), airing on cable (freeing it from already-relaxed FCC guidelines for broadcast networks) and using computer animation that allows rapid production, are able to parody political events almost immediately after their occurrence. In 2005, *South Park* responded to the Terri Schiavo controversy (over the moral and ethical implications of ceasing her life support) with an episode in which Cartman defends Kenny's right to death (the episode's humor is derived through multiple layers: the direct referencing of the Schiavo case, still being discussed on national television when the episode aired; the use of children as wise-beyond-their-years yet cynical commentators on contemporary mores; and the fact that every previous episode of *South Park* had featured Kenny's death through increasingly bizarre circumstances that went almost unnoticed by the other characters, for whom death and destruction on television had become routine). Like other adult-oriented animated series, *South Park* remains purposely ambivalent in its politics, preferring to poke fun at both authority and resistance to it, appealing to cynical audiences on both ends of the political spectrum.

The Simpsons and *South Park,* along with *Family Guy* (1999–2001, 2004–), *American Dad* (2004–), and other series, often situate their satire within nuclear families and use children as their central commentators (and usually the voices of reason), with adults typically depicted as buffoons who are quick to judge and easily duped. This suggests that the appeal of these series might also rely on generational humor that pokes fun at the baby boomer generation while affirming the open-minded, color-blind, apolitical values of generations X and Y. Such audiences also continue to watch reruns of Hanna-Barbera cartoons on cable networks such as Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon through increasingly nostalgic yet cynical lenses, reading series like *Scooby Doo* (1969–1993) as containing covert drug references and other countercultural themes yet still depicting a far less complicated world than the contemporary one. Tellingly, when Cartoon Network launched its Adult Swim block in 2001, it used the series *Space Ghost Coast-to-Coast* (1994–) as its cornerstone. *Space Ghost* recycles a lesser-known, late-1960s Hanna-Barbera superhero as a talk show host, purposely calling attention to both the bizarreness of the genre blending and the amusingly inane yet harmless characters.

In fact, Comedy Central's success is perhaps most indicative of the direction television cartoons are headed. Launched in 1992 by Ted Turner, the cable network was intended to take advantage of the synergistic potential of media conglomerates. In 1991, Turner purchased Hanna-Barbera's library, adding it to the MGM Tom and Jerry cartoons and Warner

Brothers' pre-1950s cartoon library that he had already acquired. Not surprisingly, the earliest fare on Cartoon Network was repackaged classics. Original programming began in 1994. In 1995, Turner Broadcasting Systems merged with Time Warner, Inc., expanding the network's exposure and profile while also leading to increased synergies. Time Warner, Inc. owns DC Comics, and the Cartoon Network has been the launching ground for several superhero adaptations based on DC properties, including *Superman: The Animated Series* (1996–2000), *Justice League* (2001–), and *Teen Titans* (2003–). The network's popularity has grown rapidly from an estimated 12.4 million viewers in 1994 to 80 million in 2002. Although its core target audience is children aged 2–11, Cartoon Network has also successfully attracted a more lucrative "tween" audience (ages 9–12) with disposable income and desperate to join the ranks of adolescent consumers. Additionally, one third of Cartoon Network's audience are adults aged 18–34. Many are parents, yet others are attracted by the network's nostalgic fare marketed through contemporary cynical sensibilities. *The PowerPuff Girls,* created in 1998, combine postfeminist notions of girl power, psychedelic animation, and relentless merchandising. In 2000 alone, PowerPuff merchandise exceeded $350 million. As of 2003, Cartoon Network is the eighth largest advertiser-supported basic-cable network on television.

Since the mid-1990s, animated feature films have also made a comeback as new computer graphics imaging technologies have allowed more complex graphics that offer a greater degree of verisimilitude. Whereas *Snow White* aimed for a lyrical realism, contemporary films such as *Toy Story* (1995) and *The Incredibles* (2004) often intentionally play upon the realistic movements and settings of their animated characters, making the juxtaposition part of the pleasure. Contemporary motion pictures are still designed to please multiple audiences through intertextual dialogues and imagery. *Toy Story* showcases a wide variety of play objects that evoke nostalgia among adult generations (Woody is a talking cowboy doll, Mr. Potato Head, is, well, a Mr. Potato Head, and even Buzz Lightyear, the supposed "next generation" of toys, is more reminiscent of 1980s action figures than of contemporary video games). Still, contemporary film animation remains controversial for similar reasons, as did its predecessors. Accusations of violence and blatant merchandising are often accompanied today by concerns over gender and race representations, signaling the increased media savvy of today's audiences. Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995) was accused of whitewashing Native American history, ignoring historical atrocities while rendering Pocahontas as an Indian Barbie doll.

—Avi Santo

See also Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Market Size and; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Anime; Cartoons, Educational; Cartoons, Gender Representation in; Cartoons, Violence in; Comic Books, Superheroes in; Comics, Daily Newspaper; Manga (Japanese Comic Books); Media Effects; Regulation, Television

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CARTOONS, VIOLENCE IN

Parents and watchdog groups have cried out against the amount of violence in children's programs for years. However, others feel that violence in cartoons has little effect on subsequent behavior because cartoons show fantasy violence and are far removed from real life. In general, research has supported the belief that viewing violence in cartoons *does* have an effect on children's subsequent aggressive thoughts and behavior. The effect is strongest among very young children (under age 7) who may have difficulty differentiating between fantasy and reality. Most adults and older children realize that Superman

cannot actually fly and that the monsters in *Pokémon* are not real. However, very young children may believe that, if they put on a cape and jump off the couch, they will soar through the air, or that the monsters they view on television are real and are hiding under their bed ready to bite their ankles should they carelessly let a foot fall over the side. Because the television characters young children view each morning are very real to them, they are more likely to imitate the behavior they see.

Several research groups over the last few decades have analyzed the content of children's television programming to discover the amount of violence and the contextual features of children's cartoons. The prevalence of violence in cartoons has changed over time; however, methods and sampling techniques have varied considerably from study to study. In the late 1960s, Leonard Zusne found that nearly 6% of the total time in a sample of 64 cartoons was spent engaging in violence. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, George Gerbner and his colleagues made extensive analyses of the violence in children's programming and found that children's programs were consistently more violent than any other genre. On average, 90% of children's television programs contained violence, compared with 70% found in mainstream programs. This finding remained stable in the early 1990s, with cartoons being the most violent programs, compared with 16 other genres.

The most recent and extensive study on violence in children's television programming was conducted by Barbara Wilson and colleagues as part of the National Violence Study. Overall, 69% of children's television programs contained violence, compared to 57% found in other programming. Violence aimed at children was more likely to be portrayed in a humorous context, and it was less realistic than in other programming. Aggressors were less likely to be punished for their actions, and short- and long-term consequences were often absent. All these contextual variables have been shown to increase the likelihood of imitation of violence witnessed on television. On a positive note, children's programs were less graphic and were less likely to show gun violence than were other programs.

As in earlier research, Wilson et al. split up children's programming into several subtypes and found marked differences in how violence was portrayed in each category. According to Wilson et al., slapstick programs (e.g., *Tom and Jerry, Looney Toons*) are the most troubling in terms of increased risk of imitation. These are programs that involve anthropomorphized characters who engage in off-the-wall antics. The plots are usually simple and repetitive, and they often involve large chases or games that defy the law of physics. For example, imagine Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner from *Looney Toons,* in which each cartoon is a farcical chase that involves exploding dynamite, falling grand pianos, and giant slingshots. One hundred percent of slapstick cartoons contained some form of violence, and a child watching this type of program can expect to see a violent act every 2 minutes. Violence in these programs shows a very unrealistic level of harm, is often portrayed as justified, and is cased in humor. These programs may be particularly harmful for very young children, who may have difficulty separating fantasy from reality.

Superhero programs (e.g., *Batman, Spiderman*) are nearly as violent as slapstick ones. As the name suggests, these programs involve characters with fantastical powers such as the ability to fly or to become invisible, who often use violence to save the day from the bad guys. Ninety-seven percent of these programs contained some violence, with a violent incident nearly every 2 minutes. Violence in superhero programs is also problematic, as it is portrayed by attractive heroes who use justified violence to save the world. The heroes are almost always rewarded for their violent actions, and guns and other weapons are more likely to be seen in this subtype than in other children's cartoons. This potent combination makes these programs particularly risky for subsequent imitation by viewers.

Mystery and adventure programs (e.g., *Scooby Doo, Goosebumps*) contain about half the amount of violence of slapstick and superhero programs. Although 90% of programs still feature some violence, the plot is likely to focus on solving a riddle or a problem instead of physical confrontation.

The last two categories, social relationship programs and magazine programs, contain much less violence than the previous examples. Social relationship programs (e.g., *Rugrats, My Little Pony*) focus on getting along or working out problems among a group involving friends, family, or peers. Only about 50% of these programs contain violence; the violence that is portrayed is commonly less lethal and more likely than other programs to show the consequences of violence. Magazine programs (e.g., *Blue's Clues, Sesame Street*) are by far the most innocuous. These programs feature a series of short segments involving, skits, stories, or songs. The programs are often "educational," and fewer than 20% contain violence.

One type of cartoon not represented in Wilson et al.'s study is anime, cartoons based on Japanese animation. This is because anime did not air on American television until 1998, one year after Wilson and colleagues' study. When first introduced, *Pokémon,* an anime cartoon featuring little "pocket monsters," immediately became the number one children's program in syndication. The popularity of *Pokémon* spurred a number of anime-like programs, including *Digimon, Dragon Ball Z,* and *Inuyasha.* These programs have been criticized for containing unusually high amounts of graphic violence. Time will tell what impact these incredibly popular and violent programs will have on children's development.

Violence in cartoons is often varied and depends on the subtype examined. However, as a whole, violence in cartoons is marked by its lack of consequences and by humorous presentation that can trivialize the seriousness of violent behavior. Such portrayals have vast implications for society as a whole because they may teach young children that violence is an acceptable answer to any problem they face.

—Sarah M. Coyne

See also Aggression, Television and; Cartoons, Gender Representation in; Cartoons, History of; Fantasy–Reality Distinction; Fear Reactions; National Television Violence Study

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CATHARSIS THEORY

Catharsis theory dates back to ancient Greece, when Aristotle suggested that art can have a cathartic (cleansing) effect by allowing us to experience powerful emotions such as pity and terror without having to go through the real-life events that would give rise to such feelings. Catharsis theory has changed since Aristotle's time; modern proponents suggest that it means that people, including children, can use various media (movies, television, video games) as ways to vent inappropriate urges or emotions in safe, socially acceptable ways. For instance, instead of acting out violently against peers, a child can play a video game that allows violent behavior to be purged, hopefully preventing violence from ever manifesting in a real encounter. However, most research on media effects, particularly regarding children, contradicts catharsis theory and suggests that the detrimental effects of media depicting undesirable behavior outweigh any cathartic function.

The origins of contemporary catharsis theory can be traced to Jacob Bernays, who in 1857 suggested that there was a psychological benefit to getting rid of unhealthy emotions or urges. Bernays said that one way to purge these feelings was through the consumption of art or media that contained similar themes (for instance, violent art to purge feelings of anger or violence). Not to flush out these bad emotions through catharsis, said Bernays, could lead to the kind of psychological maladies that his distant relative Sigmund Freud popularized during the same era.

Since Bernays's time, other media theorists have attempted to promote catharsis theory. In the 1960s and 1970s, Seymour Feshbach advanced catharsis theory through a series of experiments that examined the psychological states of subjects who consumed cathartic media. For the most part, however, a growing body of media effects research weighs in against catharsis theory, especially catharsis in children. Many recent studies find that children who consume a particular kind of media are more likely to imitate the behavior depicted in the programming than are children who watch something else. Such a result is the opposite of what catharsis theory suggests would occur (a decrease in the behavior viewed attributable to a catharsis effect).

For example, a 1995 study of children's behavior after viewing *The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* found that children who watched the program in an experimental setting demonstrated seven times as many physically aggressive acts toward other children during playtime as did those who did not watch the Power Rangers before playing. If the violent content of the aggressive cartoon served to purge similar tendencies in young audiences, as catharsis theory would suggest, then watching the Power Rangers should result in fewer, not more, aggressive acts in children.

However, it should be noted that the influential effect of media content can be used for positive ends as well. In her 2001 doctoral dissertation at the University of Melbourne, Katrina Skewes found evidence that, for bereaved adolescents, group therapy using the cathartic function of music was successful in improving the mental condition of the subjects.

Most of the current research that undermines catharsis theory was not conducted with catharsis theory in mind. Instead, many of these studies were conducted to test support for social learning theory, which suggests that many behaviors can be "learned" socially by watching others perform them. If those seen displaying the behavior are somehow rewarded for it, social learning of the behavior is said to be encouraged. For the last 20 years or so, social learning theory and catharsis theory have been positioned in near perfect opposition to each other as researchers attempt to explain the implications of mediated depictions of undesirable behavior. For now, a growing body of evidence seems to contradict catharsis theory.

—Marc C. Seamon

See also Desensitization Effects; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory; Television Violence

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CELLULAR TELEPHONES

See MOBILE TELEPHONES

CENTER FOR MEDIA EDUCATION (CME)

The Center for Media Education (CME) was a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization that represented the interests of families and children in national media policy debates. Cofounded in 1991 by Kathryn Montgomery, a former professor at the University of California at Los Angeles, and Jeffrey Chester, a filmmaker and activist, CME became best known for leading a series of successful, high-profile policy campaigns during the 1990s.

The group's 1992 report on broadcast failure to comply with the 1990 Children's Television Act sparked a major public debate about quality in educational programming and prompted the Federal Communications Commission to conduct a formal proceeding on the issue. CME organized a coalition of child advocacy, health, and education groups in a 4-year effort to strengthen the implementation rules, resulting in a 1996 rule requiring TV stations to air a minimum of 3 hours of children's educational programming per week as a condition of license renewal. In 1997, CME led a coalition of groups in negotiations with leaders of the television industry to amend the TV Parental Guidelines, which had been developed to work with the congressionally mandated V-chip. As a result of these efforts, content descriptors (V, L, D, S, FV) were added to the age-based television ratings. CME's 1996 report, *Web of Deception,* alerted parents, policymakers, and the press to potentially harmful marketing and data collection practices targeted at children and teenagers on the World Wide Web. CME partnered with the Consumer Federation of America, as well as other child advocacy and privacy groups, to petition the Federal Trade Commission to institute rules to safeguard children's privacy on the Internet. This work led to passage of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) in 1998.

CME was also centrally involved in policy efforts to promote equity and access in the new digital media, cofounding the Telecommunications Policy Roundtable, a coalition of civil liberty, education, and computer groups that advocated the "Public Interest Principles for the Information Superhighway." CME worked closely with national education and library groups to encourage their involvement in congressional deliberations on the Telecommunications Act of 1996, resulting in the creation of a federal fund (often referred to as the *e-rate*) to provide affordable

access to the Internet for schools and libraries. In partnership with the University of Texas, the CME organized a major national conference in 1998, bringing together leading figures in the academic and commercial sectors to address the issues of quality, research, and access in children's new media. The conference helped lay the groundwork for the establishment of the National Science Foundation's Children's Digital Media Centers.

In 2003, when Kathryn Montgomery returned to full-time teaching at American University, the CME closed its doors, transferring its research initiatives to American University as part of the new Youth, Media and Democracy Project in the School of Communication. The project's 2004 report, *Youth as E-Citizens,* documented the variety of ways that adolescents and youth were using the Internet for civic and political engagement.

—Kathryn C. Montgomery

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CHANNEL ONE

See Commercial Television in Schools

CHAT ROOMS

Use of online chat rooms by children and teenagers has received a great deal of media attention. Although the primary focus has been on the perceived risk to children of contact with pedophiles in this environment, chat room use also has some positive aspects.

There is some confusion over the term *chat room* in popular usage. Although the term is sometimes used to describe any form of non-email message exchange, the term is used in this entry to refer to a shared online space in which two or more people communicate simultaneously. It is distinct from instant messaging (IM) because the latter is designed primarily around one-to-one communication with known others (although some IM software includes chat-roomlike features).

According to a U.S. survey of Internet-initiated sex crimes against minors reported by Wolak, Finkelhor, and Mitchell, 76% of initial approaches came through chat rooms. However, such crimes rarely correspond to the media stereotype of the prepubescent child lured to an innocent meeting and abducted. Of all crimes identified in the survey, only 1% were committed against 12-year-olds (75% of them female), although 26% were committed against 13-year-olds, 22% against 14-year-olds, and 28% against 15-year-olds. The offenders did tend to be considerably older; only 1% were under 18, 23% were 18–25, 41% were 26–39, and 35% were 40 or over. However, only 5% represented themselves as teenagers (a further 25% shaved a few years off their ages), and 84% of cases did not involve coercion. Four out of five offenders brought up sexual topics during online communication with victims.

Although an increasing number of large companies hosting such chat rooms have either regulated them or shut them down, large numbers of unregulated chat rooms remain, as does Internet Relay Chat, which uses an open standard and is highly fragmented and therefore very difficult to regulate. Talking to strangers in chat rooms is one of the behaviors most likely to be banned by parents (along with giving personal information and meeting strangers face to face). Chat room use tends to be more prevalent (and riskier) among adolescents than among younger children, and there is some evidence that children who use chat rooms are more likely to come from difficult environments and to practice other risky behavior. Chat rooms are not, however, a particularly popular use of the Internet, even among young people. A United Kingdom survey of 9-to-16-year-olds found that 18% accessed chat rooms (O'Connell, 2003), and a NetRatings Australia survey of 8-to-13-year-olds with home Internet access found that 16% of girls and 20% of boys accessed chat rooms, whereas IM was practiced by 44% of girls and 36% of boys. Chat rooms specifically aimed at teens are often popular hangouts, and they participate over a range of topics—often self-help and peer support or music-based rooms.

It is hard to assess the overall risk to young people from unwelcome face-to-face contact driven by chat, but the potential psychological harm from strictly online interaction is a more widespread danger. In a survey of 1,500 U.S. youths (ages 10–17) who went online at least monthly, almost one in five had received an unwanted sexual solicitation online—one in four of which made them "very or extremely afraid."

Comparatively little research has been done on the practices or benefits of online chat outside of the harms outlined above. However, Danet has studied how Internet Relay Chat was used in a creative fashion to improvise artistic performances online, and, more generally, a number of authors—Turkle prominent among them—have suggested that adolescents can benefit from using online experimentation to explore and develop their identities. Because online communication lacks physical cues, it can be easier for children to overcome embarrassment and talk to their peers or to adults in chat rooms, and this can help them practice their social skills.

—David Brake

See also Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Internet Use, Social; Regulation, Internet

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CHAT ROOMS, SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC PROCESSES IN

When *face-to-face communication* takes place, there is co-presence: The participants are in the same place at the same time, using both speech and nonverbal messages to make themselves understood. Those communicating in *computer-mediated chat,* or *online chat,* on the other hand, are separated geographically but logged in simultaneously to a virtual chat room. They are making themselves understood by typing messages quickly onto a keyboard; online chatters alternate rapidly, and the chat program shows the successive contributions on the computer screen. Online chat is written conversation. Like face-to-face conversations, it can take place as a dialogue or in a group.

The term *chat room* usually applies to *webchat*, in which chat rooms are accommodated on Web servers and can be used by means of a Web browser; a chat room is basically nothing but a window appearing on the screen. There are also graphical chat systems in which the chatters can move as *avatars* (graphical representations like cartoon characters or photos) through a pictorial scene such as a living room or forest or discotheque (the Palace at www.palacetools.com is an example). Although there are many chat rooms with unrestricted topics, basically for small talk (*off-topic chat rooms*), others are dedicated to particular themes, target groups, or purposes, which are usually clear from the name adopted for the room (*on-topic chat rooms*).

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) is communication made possible through networks of servers that allow group communication in discussion forums called *channels*. The processes of communication in webchats are often difficult to capture for documentation purposes, but those in IRC channels can be automatically logged on the IRC "client" (the program used to connect to the server). As a consequence, sociological and linguistic studies of the chat process relate in many cases to IRC. However, the results are normally transferable to webchatting.

According to a Pew Internet & American Life Project study described by Lenhard, Rainie, and Lewis, more than half the 12-to-17-year-old Internet users in the United States (55%) were users of chat rooms in 2001; the figure for adult users was about a quarter, at 26%. Male and female teenagers are equal in their love of chatting. It is more common for the 15–17 age group to chat than for the 12–14 age group. The figure for those visiting a chat room among young people using the Internet daily is as high as 62%. Although chatting is less common among North American teenagers than email (used by 92%), it is still more popular than creating one's own homepage (24%). For individual countries, the chatter statistics require separate analysis.

SOCIAL PROCESSES IN CHAT ROOMS

Before entering a chat room, one has to select a *chat name* or nickname; in the case of graphic chat rooms, the user also needs to select an avatar. The choice of nickname (e.g., "tom_17," "eminem-fan," "Barbiedoll_14) may communicate such identification marks as gender, age, and interests, and may also indicate motives for the communication. On entering a chat room, the user announces his or her arrival and then joins the ongoing conversations. Because the chatters are not physically present in an actual room, words of greeting are important. Chatters who have "met" previously address each other by name, and generally users say "hi" or give verbal hugs. If there are lots of chatters in a room, there will be different chat threads running in parallel, and beginners will find it hard to get a clear picture. It takes time to work out the different threads and to address individual chatters by name (e.g., "tom_17: where are you from"). Also, a distinction has to be made between pauses in chatting caused by the system and socially determined periods of silence.

The invisibility of online chatters necessitates an initial exchange of basic information when a conversation is started with an unknown person. This verbal questioning is redundant in face-to-face meetings. If the nickname has not already revealed the details, an *ASL check* (age, sex, location) takes place, and a possible reply would be "w/16/texas." It is, of course, not absolutely necessary that these and other identifying details given in chat reflect reality exactly. Online chatters occasionally change their reported sex, physical appearance, or—even more commonly—their age. Young teenagers are particularly eager to appear older. Some chatters construct outright fake identities for themselves. However, playing with virtual identities meets its limits when chatters are not interested in mere online chat sessions but wish to develop longer-term and more serious contacts with other chatters. That makes it difficult and quite taxing to continue with a consistent fictitious identity. It also makes the transfer to telephoning or meeting quite impossible. Most chatters will disguise one or two aspects of themselves in their online persona (weight or size, for instance) but do on the whole keep in line with reality.

Chatting may be an entertaining pastime for short breaks, just like computer games or TV broadcasts. In this case, no closer contact with the other chatters is sought. On the other hand, chatting can come a highly social activity. Some chatters are regular visitors to their chat rooms, as others may be regulars at a pub; they know members there personally and feel as if they belong to a chat community. They may at times take voluntary responsibility for managing the chat room, perhaps designing a homepage for it or organizing meetings and parties in real life for the other chatters.

A chat room's clientele will generally be composed of regulars, and, on the periphery, occasional visitors plus the people known as *lurkers*. The latter are people who visit online forums or chat rooms and merely observe what is going on without expressing themselves actively. Each chat room functions in accordance with its own rules. They may be written rules in the form of *chatiquette*. Chatiquette prescribes what behavior is frowned upon and what the sanctions are. The options for sanctions and punishment in chat rooms are technical (when people are mechanically excluded, e.g.) or social (when other chat participants express criticism or derision).

There are group dynamics in operation in chat room populations just as in face-to-face groups; there are outsiders, leaders, popular members, troublemakers, and clowns. There is the possibility for conflicts and arguments but also for a strong sense of solidarity. Chat rooms frequented by a relatively small number of people who know each other well tend to make it difficult for newcomers to integrate into the community. Large chat rooms with dozens or even hundreds of simultaneous participants tend to be confusing and feel anonymous. In this case, chatters often retreat for dialogue or small-group conversation into a private chat area, often called a *separée,* where they will not be disturbed and where they may engage in cybersex.

For children and adolescents, chat rooms constitute new opportunities for entertainment and contact which may well encourage them in their development. However, it is wise for children and adolescents to be made aware of the risks inherent in chatting and the precautions they can take. There are many *teen chats* and chat rooms for children that are subject to special rules and are under constant supervision so that misbehavior can be tackled immediately.

LINGUISTIC PROCESSES IN CHAT ROOMS

Because chatting as written conversation requires typing and reading at lightning speed, it is understandable that

a specialized chat language has become necessary. This language, closely observed, reveals a great deal of linguistic variety.

Abbreviations are the first means by which chat language speeds up the writing. Some well-known examples are LOL (laughing out loud), ROFL (rolling on the floor laughing), and IMHO (in my humble opinion). In addition, the variety of written language, consciously used, is very informal. People employ colloquial expressions, dialect, slang, and so on, to express a sense of belonging or absence of formality. There are also many ways of expressing emotions and nonverbal language: "smilies" such as :-) or :-(and words for actions or sounds such as *sigh*, *grin*, *smile*, *cuddle*, *yawn*, together with an abundance of exclamation marks (Hi!!!!!!!). Although there is some criticism that chat ruins language, linguists actually note the creativity involved, which includes linguistic humor and fun and games. Chat competence cannot exist without social competence or, indeed, without a certain amount of special linguistic competence, for chatting works best with humor and clever repartee.

—*Nicola Döring*

See also Digital Divide; Digital Literacy, Email; Instant Messaging; Internet Relay Chat (IRC); Internet Use, Gender and; Sex, Internet Solicitation of; Webcams

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CHILD-CENTERED VS. MEDIA-CENTERED PERSPECTIVES

Researchers and writers in media studies and media education debate the effects of experience with media (e.g., television, movies, video games, the Internet) on children and adolescents. The two major approaches in this debate are sometimes called *media-centered perspectives*, which focus on the influence of media on children and adolescents, and *child-centered perspectives*, which focus on their interaction with media.

Research and writing from a media-centered perspective are characterized by the belief that the influence of the media on children and adolescents is primarily negative and that children and adolescents are passive recipients of media messages, somewhat akin to empty vessels filled and shaped by media messages or even brainwashed by the media. Media-centered perspectives have a longer history than child-centered perspectives and emerge from media critiques from a wide range of political, cultural and religious views. Some media critics argue that the media influence children and adolescents with morally questionable ideas and images, lead to the degradation of traditional values, or give rise to violence. Other media

critiques argue from this perspective that the media influence children with unacceptable messages and images that give rise to rampant consumerism, violence, negative self-images, and discriminatory representations of humans.

Child-centered perspectives, also commonly called *audience response perspectives*, arose in response to what some researchers and writers saw as an overly simplistic model of audience effect in media-centered perspectives. These critiques contend that the media-centered approach fails to take into account the individual and social interactions of children and adolescents with the media, which mediate, limit, and shape the viewer's reception of media messages. They argue that children and adolescents are active, selective, and critical consumers of media. According to the child-centered perspective, the meanings children make of media messages are complex and unstable; they are negotiated in relation to viewers' identities (racial, gender, and social class, to name a few), their communities, their peer cultures, and other factors of their contexts. From this perspective, meaning is made in an active exchange between the media and the child or adolescent, and therefore there are many possible messages or meanings that children might make of any single media event.

Child-centered writers argue that media are an authentic part of children and adolescents' cultures and that this perspective is more democratic and more responsive to children and adolescents' interests, desires, and goals. However, media-centered critics respond by arguing that proponents of the child-centered approach are naïve about the power of the media to shape children's desires in ways that are inauthentic or objectionable. The argument between these two perspectives may be said to come down to different perspectives on the power of the media to persuade or influence child and adolescent consumers of media and on what counts as worthwhile culture.

Each perspective brings with it different educational responses. From a media-centered perspective, teaching about the media is seen as a means of providing children and adolescents with tools of analysis that will make them less vulnerable to and more critical of media influence. From a child-centered perspective, media education classrooms may be a place to investigate students' investments and pleasures related to media. In such approaches, critique of the media proceeds by highlighting the ambivalences and contradictions that students feel toward the media—for example, when a student enjoys a song, magazine, or movie but also understands it to present negative messages about a facet of the student's identity. In both kinds of classrooms, students may be made aware of or may make others aware of outlets for alternative media messages.

—Gail Masuchika Boldt

See also Consumerism; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Literacy; Media Effects; Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Literacy Programs; Research Methods, Children and; Television, Prosocial Content and

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CHILDHOOD, MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF

Few studies devote themselves exclusively to media portrayals of childhood, and few of those look at a variety of media. The relative lack of research on the image of children and teens in the media suggests that this is an area ripe for study. However, some studies have examined changes in portrayals of television families over time and gender differences in television depictions of youth. Other research has analyzed the roles of youth who are featured as central characters in films. However, future research needs to examine the roles that younger people play in a variety of media.

Susannah Stern, who studied film images of teens, wrote in 2005 that no previous studies had systematically documented patterns in the portrayal of teens in film. She suggests that the lack of research on media images of youth is due to scholars' attention to the impact of media on youth rather than to what adults can learn about young people from the media. There are, however, a few examinations of the roles of children in television families. Children are a stable feature, particularly in situation comedies, and frequently they are at the center of the action on those programs.

TELEVISION FAMILIES

William Douglas and Beth Olson conducted an extensive content analysis of television families from 1950 to 1990 and found that the experience of children in these families has deteriorated. Their lives in the more recent decades were more conflicted, less cohesive, and less manageable than in previous decades. Relationships among siblings were more hostile and less cohesive as well. Along these lines, in 1991 Mary Larson compared sibling interaction on 1950s sitcoms with that on 1980s sitcoms. She compared *Father Knows Best, Leave It to Beaver,* and *Ozzie and Harriet* with *The Cosby Show, Family Ties,* and *Growing Pains.* She found that interactions were more positive—that is, included supportive or positive statements or nonhostile teasing—in the 1950s but were more important and more central to the story in the 1980s.

P. A. Cantor's in-depth look at *The Simpsons,* an animated family comedy show that first aired in 1989, examines how the Simpson children and their lives are portrayed. The Simpsons live in small-town America, the children attend a neighborhood school, and the whole family goes to church regularly. One of the three children is a baby; the other two are older and have distinct personalities. Bart is portrayed somewhat stereotypically in that he is always in trouble, "troublemaker" being a trait more often assigned to boys than to girls. He is rebellious and has no respect for authority, particularly educational authority. Lisa is an overachiever in school, a feminist, a vegetarian, and an environmentalist. She is also an activist who is not afraid to take on the entire town when outraged about something. In contrast to both Bart and Lisa, the two neighbor boys are well behaved and obedient.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Two studies by Kate Peirce looked more specifically at television's child characters themselves, analyzing the attributes and activities of the characters to see where there were gender differences. Significant differences were found with the bipolar adjectives active–inactive, aggressive–passive, rational–irrational, and unhappy–happy. Boys were associated with the adjectives *active, aggressive, rational,* and *unhappy.* Boys and girls also participated in stereotypically male and female activities. Girls played dress-up, helped in the kitchen, talked on the phone, and played with dolls. Boys participated in sports and other outdoor activities and were more likely than the females to make mischief and get into trouble. A similar analysis some years later found fewer divisions between the sexes. Girls were considered more fashionable and emotional than boys, but all were considered smart, active, somewhat aggressive, attractive, happy, skinny, popular, and somewhat strong. There were no significant differences in the gender of those who participated in activities considered male or neutral, but few males participated in activities considered female. Activities considered masculine included rescuing people; breaking and entering and other illegal or mischievous acts; and playing video games, pool, and poker. Female activities included shopping, talking to friends, taking ballet lessons, and putting away groceries.

TEENAGERS IN FILMS

In her study of popular films and the image of teenagers, Stern looked at films from 1999 to 2001 that featured one or more teenagers as central characters. She wanted to examine the types of behaviors the characters engaged in, what motivations were expressed, to what extent their parents were depicted, and what sort of relationship parents had with their children. She found that most characters (86.3%) were white; among the white characters, genders were equally represented, but nonwhite characters were more likely to be male. The most common activities for the characters were hanging out, socializing at school, and making out. These were followed by grooming, being victimized by violence, and committing violence. More socially positive activities, such as caring for family or volunteering, were rarely shown. The primary motivation for the characters was a romantic relationship. Their parents were rarely shown in the films, and only 15% of the characters were depicted as living in residence with two parents. Stern believes the problems with such depictions of young people are that (1) the popular behaviors shown were self-serving, pleasure-seeking, and violent, whereas the actual teen crime rate is at its lowest in 25 years; (2) the absence of teens as workers, volunteers, and caregivers may contribute to adults' ideas that teens are lazy and irresponsible; (3) parents were depicted as only mildly competent and in touch; and (4) racial stereotyping was present; nonwhites were significantly more likely to commit violence.

The few studies about coverage of youth in the news found that the most common stories deal with youth as victims or perpetrators of crime.

—*Kate Peirce*

See also Adolescents, Media Portrayals of; Family, Television Portrayals of; Family Relationships, Television and; Gender Roles on Television; News, Portrayals of Children and Adolescents in; Youth Culture

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CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Sex is the number one topic searched for on the Internet. Americans spend $10 billion each year on pornographic materials such as magazines and videos—as much as they spend to attend sporting events and movies or to purchase music. Few areas of sexual behavior arouse as much condemnation as child sexual abuse, and child pornography (despite lack of a consensus definition) is often considered the epitome of sexual abuse. The U.S. Customs Service estimates that more than 100,000 websites offer child pornography worldwide, more than half of which have originated in the United States. Such websites have made such pornographic materials easier to disseminate and to access than ever before, and the prevelance and distribution of child pornography has become a national concern.

In the United States, child pornography is prohibited under both federal and state laws, with some state laws including more or less restrictive definitions compared with federal law. Under federal law, *child pornography* is defined as visual depiction of minors (under the age of 18) engaged in a sex act such as intercourse, oral sex, or masturbation as well as the overt depictions of genitals. It has been suggested by academics and others that the consumption of child pornography may cause pedophilia and lower the threshold of a person's willingness to engage in sex with a child through the process of desenitization. On the other hand, it is argued that these materials may potentially give pedophiles a sexual outlet, thereby lowering sexual frustration and the risk of committing abuse. Research in this area is inconclusive.

THE EXTENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Reports of suspected child pornography climbed 39% in 2004, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which collects tips about the problem both online and by telephone. The organization's CyberTipline logged more than 100,000 reports of possession, creation, or distribution of pornography featuring children in 2004, the seventh consecutive year that such incidents increased since the 24-hour hotline was established in 1998. On a positive note, indecent images of children posted on websites and newsgroups over a 4-year period from 1998 to 2002 were sampled, and a significant decline in the number of such images posted on the Internet was observed, likely due to the pressure of groups opposed to the distribution of such exploitative material.

Child pornography on the Internet is available in many different formats, ranging from pictures, anime cartoons, and video to sound files and stories. Most pornographic material is distributed via email, newsgroups, or Web pages. Child pornography is also distributed during conversations in chat rooms and through interactive home pages. The Internet provides offenders with a large degree of security and anonymity, resulting in the rapid increase in the distribution of child pornography online. It is likely that the anonymity and convenience provided through online interactions has contributed to an increasing population

of child pornography consumers who did not actively seek out such material through the more traditional media due to lack of access and fear of being caught.

A study conducted in 2003 by the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire examined 2,577 arrests for online juvenile victimization and found that more than two thirds of those who sexually violated juveniles possessed child pornography, and 36% of the arrests related exclusively to trading Internet child pornography. Child pornography as an industry, which is illegal worldwide, continues to grow as well.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMERS

An investigation by Ian Munro and Catharine Munro states that little is known about child pornography consumers. Little empirical data exist on the characteristics and motivating factors of individuals who seek out child pornography. Research suggests that such individuals are generally between the ages 25 and 50 with no prior criminal background. Further, individuals who have accessed child pornography tend to be better educated and of higher intelligence and are more likely to be employed and to be in relationships than those who commit hands-on sexual offenses against children.

In a research effort conducted by Ethel Quayle and Max Taylor to better understand the motivation to seek out child pornography, 13 men convicted of downloading child pornography from the Internet were interviewed, with an emphasis on how these men talked about the role of child pornography in their lives. Some of the themes that emerged from these accounts were sexual arousal, along with child pornography as collectibles, to facilitate social relationships, and as a way of avoiding real life. This research again illustrates the important role of the Internet in increasing sexual arousal to child pornography; it also highlights individual differences in whether this serves as a substitute or as a blueprint for contact offenses of pedophilia.

GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES

In response to the growing number of incidents involving child pornography, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has launched a task force to deal exclusively with the issues surrounding child pornography. The FBI pursued approximately 700 cases of child pornography in 1998, and by 2001 the taskforce was investigating more than 2,800 cases.

On June 23, 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Ratified in December 2000, the CIPA requires schools and libraries receiving federal funds for Internet access to block or filter access to visual depictions that are obscene or feature child pornography and to material that could be deemed harmful to minors.

State legislators also have begun to take action to prevent the distribution of child pornography. The Pennsylvania legislature passed a law requiring Internet service providers to block access to websites containing child pornography. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT) challenged the law on the grounds that it was unconstitutional under the First Amendment, alleging that the law requires blocking access to many websites that have nothing to do with child pornography. A federal judge agreed with the ACLU and the CDT and overturned the Pennsylvania law on the grounds that the tools for blocking child pornography sites also cause "massive suppression" of constitutionally protected speech.

—Andrea M. Bergstrom

See also Pornography, Internet; Pornography, Movies; Pornography, U.S. Public Policy on

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CHILDREN NOW

Children Now is a national organization dedicated to making children's needs a top public policy priority. For more than 12 years, the Children and the Media Program at Children Now has worked to ensure that all children have access to a media environment that supports their healthy cognitive, social, and emotional development. As a leading public policy player in the field of children and the media, Children Now has played an important role in major policy issues that range from the V-chip and the television ratings system to the Children's Television Act and digital television. Children Now also has testified before the Federal Communications Commission and the Senate Commerce Committee on topics such as the impact of media consolidation on children's programming and how the TV ratings system could better serve families. Its work is supported through foundation grants (90%) and individual donors (10%).

Children Now recognizes that the media industry, parents and caregivers, federal regulators, and policymakers each have a role to play in creating a healthy media environment for children. To raise awareness and inspire action from each of these groups, Children Now conducts groundbreaking, timely research on media issues affecting children.

Research conducted by Children Now includes "A Different World," which studied the messages about racial and gender diversity that are sent to boys and girls across a range of media and the impacts those messages have on young viewers; "Big Media, Little Kids," which revealed the harmful effects of media consolidation on children's programming; and "Fair Play? Violence, Race, and Gender in Video Games," which found that an overwhelming majority of popular games contained significant amounts of violence and that the ratings for these games often did not acknowledge the violent content.

Children Now uses this research to educate each group of stakeholders and to provide resources and tools to enable them to make programming, viewing, and policy decisions that support children's healthy development. This strategy has enabled Children Now to win significant victories for children. Its research on the importance of racial and gender diversity to children and subsequent outreach to media industry leaders resulted in creation of Dora the Explorer, the first Latina, bilingual heroine in children's programming, and one of the most popular children's television characters in history.

Children Now's research on the detrimental effects of media consolidation on the quantity and accessibility of children's programming prompted the Federal Communications Commission to include a stipulation in their 2003 media ownership ruling protecting children from the likely harmful outcomes of media deregulation. In 2004, Children Now won a landmark victory for children and families when the Federal Communications Commission unanimously approved its recommendations regarding new rules for children's television. The new rules ensure that children have access to more educational programming and that parents have more information about how to find that programming as television transitions from an analog to a digital format.

—Christina Romano Glaubke

WEBSITE

For information about Children Now, including research and current initiatives, see the organization's website at www.childrennow.org.

CHILDREN'S ADVERTISING REVIEW UNIT (CARU)

The Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) was founded in 1974 by the National Advertising Review Committee (NARC) to promote responsible children's advertising. NARC is a strategic alliance of advertising industry organizations, including the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation (AAF), the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB). NARC has two self-regulatory investigative arms: the National Advertising Division (NAD) and CARU. NAD self-regulates national advertising, and CARU self-regulates national advertising to children aged 12 and younger in all media (for the Internet, advertising to children under 13). CARU is considered a very powerful self-regulatory program, as it has formulated and successfully implemented its advertising principles and guidelines to promote responsible advertising to children over the past three decades.

CARU'S ADVERTISING REVIEW

CARU is responsible for receiving or initiating reviews of advertising; evaluating, investigating, and analyzing advertising; holding negotiations with advertisers; and resolving complaints or questions involving the truth or accuracy of national advertising, or its consistency with CARU's *Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children's Advertising.* Any person or legal entity, including CARU as part of its monitoring responsibility procedures, may submit any complaint regarding national advertising directed to children. If an advertisement is found to be misleading, inaccurate, or inconsistent with CARU guidelines, CARU seeks changes through negotiation with the advertiser and through the voluntary cooperation of the advertiser. If the advertiser elects not to participate in the self-regulatory process or refuses to cooperate, CARU prepares a review of the facts and submits it to the appropriate federal or state law enforcement agency.

CARU'S REVIEW PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

In 1975, CARU formulated seven basic principles that embody the philosophy upon which CARU's mandate is based. These seven principles determine the scope of CARU's review of advertising and provide a basis for CARU's guidelines, many of which impose limitations on advertising practices beyond those imposed by any law or regulation. Whereas the principles broadly state the responsibilities of advertisers, the guidelines are specific and comprehensive and indicate what advertisers should or should not do. According to the guidelines, for example, children should not be urged to ask parents or others to buy products in an advertisement (e.g., "Tell your mom you want this"). In sweepstakes advertisements, the likelihood of winning should be clearly disclosed in language understandable to children (e.g., "Many will enter, a few will win"). The guidelines are broad enough and detailed enough to cover many product categories and advertising presentations directed to children. When no specific guideline addresses the issues of concern in an advertisement, CARU will apply the principles to the evaluation of the advertising.

—*Sang Lee*

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CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT OF 2000 (CIPA)

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) was enacted by Congress in 2000. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is responsible for its implementation. CIPA compels public schools and libraries receiving federal funding for Internet access to install a "technology protection measure" on each computer that connects to the Internet; they are also required to have a formal Internet safety policy.

The motivation for CIPA is to block children from accessing inappropriate sexual content online. Specifically, the law requires visual depictions that are obscene, contain child pornography, or are harmful to minors to be filtered on computers in public school and libraries. Textual content is not covered by CIPA. Obscenity and child pornography are not protected by the First Amendment in any medium, but the provision of blocking material that is harmful to minors is new. The law provides a definition of what material is "harmful to minors": depictions of nudity, sex, or excretion that, when taken as a whole, are presented in a "patently offensive" way and are determined to lack "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value as to minors." Critics of the law charge that this definition is still too broad and subject to inconsistent application.

Most schools and libraries fulfill the obligation for a technology protection measure by installing a software program capable of filtering access to offending content. The law makes clear, though, that authorized personnel must be willing and able to disable the filter program when requested by an adult. Critics of the filter requirement argue that existing filters are a form of censorship that blocks a vast amount of valuable information along with pornography. Supporters of CIPA, however, argue that excessive blocking presents minimal danger when compared to the risks of allowing children unfettered access to the Internet. Another argument in support of filters is the protection of libraries and librarians. The presence of filters

is seen as a preventative action against potential lawsuits regarding children's access to inappropriate materials.

CIPA advocates also point out that public libraries and schools can opt out of the requirement by foregoing public funding for technology updates. In *U.S. v. American Library Association,* the U.S. Supreme Court agreed, ruling CIPA constitutional because a school or library can opt out. Opponents counter that libraries in areas of poverty cannot provide Internet access unless they receive government support. Fewer people in these areas have home Internet access and therefore rely on public libraries for access.

The Internet safety policies required by CIPA address a broader range of computer-related issues. These policies must encompass access to inappropriate materials on the Internet, but they also must have provisions for handling security issues, for protecting children's privacy, and for dealing with children's use of computers for illegal activity (e.g., hacking into another computer system).

—Jennifer L. Lambe

See also Electronic Media, Children's Use of; First Amendment; Internet Blocking; Internet Pornography, Effects of; Pornography, U.S. Public Policy on; Regulation, Internet

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CHILDREN'S ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT OF 1998 (COPPA)

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) regulates the collection and use of children's personal information by website operators. Passed by Congress, COPPA assigns the tasks of issuing specific rules and handling enforcement to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The law applies to commercial websites aimed at children under the age of 13 and to general-audience websites that have "actual knowledge" that they are collecting personal information from children.

Operators of these sites must post comprehensive but clearly written privacy policies regarding their practices in handling children's personal information. They must also notify parents and (with a few exceptions) obtain verifiable parental consent before collecting the child's private information. Furthermore, parents must be given the option to allow the collection and use of their child's information by the website internally but deny the operator freedom to disclose the information to outside entities. Parents must also be able to review personal information provided by their child and correct or delete it. Parents must have the chance to prevent further collection or use of the child's information, and website operators are expected to take the steps necessary to safeguard the information they collect. Finally, COPPA bars operators from requiring children to disclose more personal information than is reasonably necessary to participate in the activity in question.

The FTC established a sliding scale approach to the level of parental consent that website operators must obtain. If a website operator is using the collected information for internal purposes, it can obtain parental consent via email. An initial notice is sent to the parent, and then some additional follow-up is required to confirm consent. If collected information is to be disclosed to third parties or made publicly available, then more reliable methods of consent are required. Acceptable measures are providing a form for parents to complete and mail or fax back to the operator, asking the parent to use a credit card in a transaction with the site, maintaining a toll-free number for parents to call, or allowing parental emails that have a digital signature.

No parental consent is required to collect a child's name and his or her parents' email address for purposes of providing notice and seeking parental consent. Also, website operators may use a child's email address once in response to a specific request from a child, as long as the email address is deleted afterwards. Email addresses may be collected to respond multiple times to a child's request (e.g., for an online newsletter) if, after the first reply to the child, parents are notified and given the choice to have their child's information deleted. Website operators are also allowed to collect name and email addresses when necessary to protect the safety of the child or the security of the site.

Critics of COPPA question the decision to apply safeguards only to children under 13, as individual children may require more or less adult supervision depending on their cognitive development. Also, some argue that the methods of collecting parental consent are too costly, too time consuming, and ineffective in

protecting personal information. First Amendment advocates are concerned that any personal identification requirements for accessing online content infringes on a person's right to communicate anonymously.

COPPA is distinct from the Children's Online Protection Act (COPA), another law passed in 1998. COPA dealt with protecting children from accessing inappropriate materials, such as pornography, on the Internet. COPA never went into effect, as its constitutionality was challenged, and the Court ruled that it violated the First Amendment.

—Jennifer L. Lambe

See also Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Internet Use, Age and; Regulation, Internet; Websites, Children's

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CHILDREN'S TELEVISION ACT OF 1990 (CTA)

The Children's Television Act of 1990 (CTA) establishes limitations on advertising during children's programming. It also gives the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) a directive to consider broadcast licensees' service to children's educational and informational needs when reviewing applications for license renewal.

This legislation is designed to provide incentives for broadcast television licensees to better serve children's needs. As grounds for the CTA, Congress found that television's prosocial potential was not being fulfilled. It stated that children are an audience with special characteristics requiring unique programming standards and noted that there are financial disincentives for commercial broadcasters to air educational and informational programming for children.

The FCC is the administrative agency charged with implementing laws regarding electronic media. To implement the CTA, the FCC set specific limits on the amount of advertising that can air during children's programming. During the week, broadcasters are permitted to run 12 minutes worth of ads per hour. On the weekends, stations can run only 10 minutes of commercials per hour of children's programming. The FCC routinely audits children's programming to assess compliance with these limitations. Any licensee found to violate these rules is asked to review its programming more thoroughly and correct problems.

The requirement that the FCC review broadcasters' provision of educational and informational programming for children has been more challenging to implement. Initially, in a 1991 order the FCC indicated that broadcasters were expected to offer "some" educational programming for children each week. As they reviewed licenses for the next 3 years, this criterion was met if licensees could demonstrate they had aired at least one half-hour show per week that served children's needs. Because the regulations were so vague, the FCC later determined that the economic marketplace was still not providing sufficient incentives for production of this sort of programming. Additionally, broadcasters were citing as educational programs that the FCC deemed to be primarily serving entertainment needs, such as *America's Funniest Home Videos* and *Yogi Bear*.

In 1996, the FCC issued more specific guidelines for this portion of the CTA. They indicated that broadcasters would meet their obligation if they had 3 hours per week of shows "specifically designed" to educate or inform children. Such programming also must be regularly scheduled, must be at least 30 minutes in length, and air between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Furthermore, the program must be identified as educational and informational when it is broadcast, and it must be listed in the public inspection file each licensee maintains.

The group Action for Children's Television (ACT) was influential in lobbying for the CTA of 1990. Formed in 1968 by Peggy Charren, the passage of this legislation was the culmination of 22 years of advocacy on behalf of children's television.

—Jennifer L. Lambe

See also Action for Children's Television (ACT); Advertising, Regulation of; Children Now; Federal Communications Commission, Deregulation of Children's Programming and; Regulation, Television; Television, Prosocial Content and

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CHILDREN'S TELEVISION CHARTER

The Children's Television Charter affirms the rights of children that are identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as these relate to television programming for and about children. The charter was presented by advocates for children's television led by Anna Home, head of Children's Programmes, Television, BBC, to the First World Summit on Children and Television, held in Melbourne, Australia, in March 1995. It was revised and approved at the Prix Jeunesse Round Table in Munich, May 1995, and has been adopted in many countries around the world.

The charter took its lead from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by nearly all countries, though not by the United States), which asserts children's rights to freedom of expression through any medium of the child's choice (Article 13) and to mass media that disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child, with particular regard to the linguistic needs of minority and indigenous groups and to protection from material injurious to the child's well-being (Article 17). Thus, the Children's Television Charter asserts children's rights to receive quality programs; to see and express themselves, their culture, their language, and their life experiences through the media; and to have access to media that affirm their sense of self, community, and place.

Specifically, the charter states:

(1) Children should have programmes of high quality which are made specifically for them, and which do not exploit them. These programmes, in addition to entertaining, should allow children to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential;

(2) Children should hear, see and express themselves, their culture, their languages and their life experiences, through television programmes which affirm their sense of self, community and place;

(3) Children's programmes should promote an awareness and appreciation of other cultures in parallel with the child's own cultural background;

(4) Children's programmes should be wide-ranging in genre and content, but should not include gratuitous scenes of violence and sex;

(5) Children's programmes should be aired in regular slots at times when children are available to view, and/or distributed via other widely accessible media or technologies;

(6) Sufficient funds must be made available to make these programmes to the highest possible standards; and

(7) Governments, production, distribution and funding organisations should recognise both the importance and vulnerability of indigenous children's television, and take steps to support and protect it.

The charter specifies a set of benchmark principles to help protect good-quality children's television. The charter was subsequently extended to include all electronic media at the Third World Summit in Thessaloniki in 2001, and it is now variously named, in different countries, the Children's Charter on Media, or Electronic Media, or Television. The charter has stimulated a series of international meetings in which senior broadcasters, media professionals, and researchers have met periodically since 1995 to develop a series of action points for implementing the charter. At the Second World Summit in London, children produced their own charter as well. However, although widely supported, it seems that, as yet, there have been few national and no international attempts to evaluate the success of the charter in altering the media landscape for children around the world.

—*Sonia Livingstone*

See also Media Advocacy; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; World Summits on Children and Television

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CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP

See SESAME WORKSHOP

CHINA, MEDIA USE IN

In the past 25 years, children's media in China have seen a great increase in the amount of content produced by both domestic and foreign media institutions. This entry focuses on the growth and transformation of the Chinese children's media, ranging from TV programs, movies, and cartoons to music, advertisements, and the Internet. Also discussed are several sociopolitical factors—the one-child policy, parental control, government's appropriation of the media for ideological and educational purposes—that influence children's media interactions. Finally, this entry highlights contemporary Chinese children's interpretive competency regarding media messages and their creative adaptation of various genres and content to their own tastes and interests.

The history of children's media in modern China can be traced back to 1874, when the first children's newspaper in China, *Xiaohai yuebao* (*The Child's Paper*), was published in Guangzhou. Then, a series of other children's publications followed during the Republican era (1912–1949), including *Shaonian zazhi* (*Youth Magazine), Ertong shijie* (*Children's World*), and *Xiao pengyou* (*Little Friends*). Researchers show that these early print media intended to foster brave, independent, and hardworking children who were equipped with critical thinking and democratic ideas. After 1949, many new books and newspapers for children emerged in China, including *Hao haizi* (*Good Children*), *Hong haizi* (*Red Children*), *Hong xiaobing* (*Little Red Guard*), and *Xin shaonian* (*New Youth*). Operating as part of a communist ideological system, these print materials aimed at cultivating communist allegiance among children and transforming them into loyal "successors of the communist cause."

As China entered its reformist era (1979–present) and opened its door to the rest of the world, children's media proliferated. A recent study shows that, in addition to newspapers, contemporary Chinese children are catered to by television, films, cartoons, magazines, and the Internet. Statistics also indicate that today's Chinese children prefer visual and audio materials to books and magazines. An average Chinese child spends 2.22 hours a day watching television and 3.53 hours a week using the Internet for music, movies, games, and chat-room socializing. In regard to media production, in 2000 there were already about 640 television stations broadcasting to children. CCTV (Chinese Central Television) alone offered 8 hours of programming per day. In 2003, CCTV debuted its children's channel, and since then it has provided 18 hours of children's programming a day. If the time that CCTV devotes to family films every day on its movie channel is included, the amount of children's programming is even higher. Moreover, during the past two decades, through its Children's Film Studio, the Chinese government has produced 90 children's films and has required the studio to keep producing at a rate of at least five movies per year. Meanwhile, China's domestic cartoon industry, although seriously threatened by Japanese and American imports, is trying to recapture Chinese children's animated imagination by fusing cutting-edge technology and traditional Chinese cultural and aesthetic values.

CONTENT OF TV, FILMS, CARTOONS, AND MUSIC

Although the quantity of children's media has increased dramatically in China, the content of these domestically produced media has been criticized by both scholars and media workers as out of touch with children. One senior scholar of children's films once pointed out that Chinese filmmakers usually do not respect the creativity of their audiences. Hence, their movies often express ideas that bear little connection to children's imagination and interests. Meanwhile, domestic children's programs still function for the state's education of children to become obedient and loyal citizens. Scholars argue that these programs have a clear moral, ideological orientation, emphasizing patriotism, social responsibility, self-fulfillment, filial piety, good manners, and the importance of collectivism and education. For instance, as one scholar documented, children in Chinese domestic media are often portrayed as agents and repositories of pride, cohesion, hope, and concern, who usually display their anger at aggression toward China and their enthusiasm for national unification. Scholars further show that Chinese children today are less and less comfortable with this pupil-teacher relationship with media. They actively interpret and interact with media content. Such an interaction, discussed in detail later, is on some level fueled by alternative imaginations enabled by the children's encounters with transnational media materials.

Accompanying the domestic proliferation of children's media is the increased accessibility of

foreign programs and materials, including Disney's *Mulan*, Japan's *Pokémon*, and Britain's *Harry Potter* series. Chinese children display incredible passion for and competence of consumption of these foreign images and stories. As a result, in order to enhance popularity, even state-sponsored publications feel the need to feature Mickey Mouse, American pop icons, and Teletubbies. Meanwhile, children's passion for foreign materials generates concerns and criticisms among educators and parents. As previous studies show, parents and teachers often criticize foreign media for instilling materialist values into children, turning them into consumers who are emotionally cold, unwilling to act unselfishly, and indifferent to the values that their parents and teachers have held central to their identities. They also have concerns over the body images and the more explicit sexual messages in American and Japanese programs, such as the images of the heroes and heroines in Japanese cartoons. Japanese cartoon characters often have children's faces but adult bodies, which, according to Chinese parents and teachers, offer a confusing self-image to young audiences. These cartoons are also criticized for perpetuating gender stereotypes, with males portrayed as more aggressive, rougher, sloppier, and stronger, and females more beautiful and more feminine.

Chinese youth music also bears the influence of Western music, such as heavy metal, rock and roll, and hip hop, although, as reports show, MTV and Channel V—Murdoch's made-for-Asia competitor to MTV—can broadcast to only a few major cities in China. Journalists write that Chinese young people started to embrace rock and roll and heavy metal in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. This music is popular among young people not so much because of the quality of the music itself but because of the social attitudes toward this type of music—unapproved and feared by parents—and because listening to it is seen as rebellious. The pioneering Chinese rock bands that young people identified as their idols in the early 1990s include *Tang Dynasty* and *Hei Bao* (*Black Panther*), whose music largely offered an emotional and social outlet for their audiences.

As more recent reports show, hip hop is winning more and more fans in Chinese metropolitan cities such as Shanghai. Young fans not only enjoy the music but also pick up its fashion, dressing as if they have just stepped straight off a New York street. For these young audience members, hip hop music and lifestyle symbolize freedom, self-expression, and life expansion.

Given the popularity of hip hop among Chinese youth, even the dominant communist ideology in China has decided to add a hip-hop spin to its old doctrines in order to sustain its influence among young people. Journalists report that in 2003 the China Record Company released an album in which Mao Ze-Dong's theories were made into rap songs. The company sold 30,000 recorded tapes and CDs in a month. This case, showing how rap, an African American, inner-city cultural form, can be appropriated in a Chinese context to carry on communist legacies, functions as a counterargument to the theory that gloalization is essentially a process of Americanization.

If rock and roll and hip hop are radically changing Chinese youth's music, some softer popular songs from Taiwan and Hong Kong—places of more liberal atmosphere—are gradually making their way into a territory that so far has been occupied solely by communist revolutionary songs: Chinese children's music classes. Reports show that, by 2005, music classes in Shanghai could teach students some "inspirational" pop songs. Although these songs were preapproved by the government for classroom use, they demonstrate the government's willingness to cater to the tastes of young people, who have long been fed up with singing only monotonous revolutionary songs.

ADVERTISEMENTS

In addition to TV programs, movies, cartoons, newspapers, and music, another important medium that targets cultural content to children is advertising. The Chinese government has enforced the one-child-per-family policy since 1979. As a result, a typical family configuration in China today is one child, two parents, and four grandparents—which, according to researchers, has significantly changed the power dynamic within the family. These only children are brought up as little emperors and empresses. Because their parents and grandparents often hold little authority over them, these children can get practically anything they want. Meanwhile, parents and grandparents do not hesitate to invest in their children's intellectual and physical growth. As scholars have documented, Chinese children are given more than $3 billion annually to spend as they wish; more important, they decide 65% of their parents' spending, probably the highest rate of influence in the world. As a result, more and more domestic and international businesses are starting to focus their campaigns on Chinese

children. Major American businesses in China include McDonald's, Disney, KFC, Nike, Adidas, and M&M.

In terms of quantity, previous studies show that, through CCTV Channel 1 alone, domestic and international advertising is able to reach 8,330,000 Chinese children ages 4 to 14 for 3 evening hours (6 p.m. to 9 p.m.). A child who spends 3 hours per day watching television may encounter 16,000 advertisements during the year.

In terms of content, studies show that the content of commercials in China reflects China's traditional cultural values and its current socioeconomic environment. The marketed traditional values include collectivism, avoidance of uncertainty and confrontation, face saving, and masculine authority, to name a few. They often coexist with Western cultures and lifestyles in both foreign and domestic commercials, partly because of foreign businesses' localized marketing strategies and partly because of the entry of Western cultures into China's own popular cultural sphere. For instance, some children's commercials manage to emphasize universal acceptance or popularity, echoing the traditional Chinese value of collectivism, without devaluing the unique appeal of their products, which is in line with the Western value of individualism.

Also, the content of both domestic and foreign commercials is subject to the regulation by the Chinese government through its Advertising Censorship Standards. Scholars argue that these standards censor commercials to guarantee cultivation of children's good behaviors and values. For instance, the standards mandate that children shown in commercials should function as models for the child audience—for example, they should not put pressure on their parents or disrespect their elders and other people. Yet, scholars do criticize the government, arguing that, although government censorship has greatly shaped the content of children's commercials, it has not adequately protected children from dishonest and misleading information in advertising.

Based on the foregoing information on the quantity and the content of both domestic and international commercials, it is safe to say that advertising has become the most popular medium used by businesses to communicate with Chinese children and to cultivate in them commercially desirable lifestyles. Considering all genres of children's media, we discover in them the continuing theme of fostering responsible citizenship as well as a broad appeal to children as consumers.

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PARENTAL CONTROL

As mentioned earlier, China's one-child policy has greatly changed the structure of Chinese family and the power dynamic within it. At the same time, scholars find that the policy has on some level strengthened the connection between Chinese children and the media, particularly television and the Internet. As lone children of the Chinese family, both parents of which usually work outside the home, they have grown up with the company of television in the absence of siblings. For them, television is the fourth audiovisual member of the family, playing a more important role than their parents in their socialization.

Another important social factor that impinges on children's interaction with media is parental control. Studies show that the flip side of lone children's increased power in the Chinese family is increased attention to and heightened expectations of them on the part of their parents and grandparents. As the school system in China grows more and more competitive, parents put more and more pressure on their children to excel in school. In some extreme cases, parents treat their children as the only bearer of their hope, whose performance at school brings either honor or shame to the family. As a result, parental control over the time and the content of their children's interaction with media has become a common practice in China. Chinese parents share a fear that too much time spent with media will cause poor school performance and that inappropriate media content, such as sex, will erode their children's moral integrity.

As research shows, 98% of Chinese parents exercise some control over the content of their children's television viewing and the amount of time they watch. The level of control ranges from persuasion to regulation or coercion. For example, the control of television includes switching channels, promoting certain programs that the parents regard as educational and informative, and prohibiting those they perceive as showing inappropriate content, such as love stories with sexual innuendos. Also, Chinese parents are concerned about the moral behaviors in commercials, and they tell researchers that they will exert more control over their children's exposure to advertising. As more and more media novelties—such as hotlines, chat rooms, the World Wide Web, and computer games—take the center stage in Chinese children's mediated lives, and as the Chinese government becomes less able to regulate

these new technologies, Chinese parents, who have been most keen on transforming the small screen into an instrument of education and discipline, find their power of control constantly threatened.

CHILDREN'S INTERACTION WITH MEDIA

Studies suggest that, contrary to their stereotypical image as introverted and obedient, studies suggest that many Chinese children have developed their own creative modes of media consumption. For instance, scholars show that parental control over viewing time and content often encounters underground resistance, as some children go to schoolmates' homes where the control is less tight to view favorite shows. These children's slogan, documented by one researcher, is, "You have your policy, I have my expediency."

Many Chinese children do believe in the importance of good school performance and display a level of self-regulation regarding their media consumption, but nevertheless they are quite cynical about their parents' instrumental use of the media. They avoid some ideology-loaded domestic programs and actively seek out imported content, such as Japanese cartoons, where their imagination can fly and where their relation to the characters is more equal than that of pupil and teacher.

Regarding the state's objective to produce patriotic, responsible, obedient citizens, Chinese children also display their negotiations. Research shows that Chinese children, especially those in developed urban areas, are growing into internationalized media consumers who have the ability to reconcile the tension between local traditional cultural values and the noncognate cultural challenges coming from international media. They negotiate a common ground for national loyalty, aesthetic taste, and brand awareness. They are local loyal citizens, but at the same time they have a taste for international media images and characters such as Mickey Mouse and Harry Potter. Hence, to recapture the interests of these active young media consumers whose horizons have already expanded into an international cultural arena, the Chinese media industry must clearly package together local content and international genres, modes, and tastes.

Chinese children also appropriate diverse media content for their own interests. A study shows that Chinese children use the Internet to make connections, to educate themselves on interpersonal relationships, and to share their youth cultures, which are informed by both domestic and international media materials. In this sense, the creative communication of these Chinese children on the Internet is beyond the sphere of control by their parents and the Chinese government.

Finally, Chinese children's active engagement with advertising is also worth our recognition. Although they are often the first within their families to learn of new products from the mass media, studies show that they are not totally susceptible to advertising appeals. As they grow up, their mistrust of advertising also grows. They ask for their parents' opinions, draw from their own consumer experiences, or even check the products at the stores to see if the commercials are true.

Given Chinese children's interpretive competency in relation to media messages and their creative appropriation of various media genres and content in their daily lives, scholars argue that films, cartoons, TV programs, Internet websites, and commercials must seriously consider these children's media use patterns and internationalized tastes in order to speak to their young minds and hence succeed as spiritual and commercial messengers.

—Yu Shi

See also Asia, Media Use in; Computer Use, Socialization and; Email Pen Pals; Media Exposure; Movie Viewing, Children's; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Peer Groups, Joint Use of Media in

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CHOICE IN MEDIA USE

Children and adolescents are selective in their media use, just as adults are. Media exposure always involves choices because there is far more content available than can be consumed. However, these choices show different patterns during childhood and puberty compared to adults' media use, and, moreover, these patterns change greatly during the early years. Children's and adolescents' choices in media use are of particular interest because they reflect how these young people use media to self-socialize. As they look for role models for their orientations, a vast amount of media content is readily available. Not only does identity formation occur in these early years; entertainment preferences as well are said to emerge through early experiences (Zillmann & Bryant, 1985).

PRECONDITIONS OF SELECTIVE MEDIA USE

With regard to media channels, many children may learn to use the media independently and selectively through audio tapes. At least in industrialized countries such as the United States and Germany, cassette and CD players are the most common media equipment in children's rooms, even for children 6 years old or younger. Although their use of other screen media is more frequent, it is likely that preschoolers have only limited influence on the choice of content, because they are reported typically to watch television or use the computer together with others, mostly adults. Nonetheless, toddlers and preschoolers play a very active role in the media use process—they ask for and help themselves to the media content they prefer. According to a large media use study of children age 6 and under conducted by Rideout and colleagues in 2003, these youngsters exert choices by turning on the TV by themselves (77%), asking for particular shows (67%), using the remote to change channels (62%), asking for videos or DVDs (71%), putting in music tapes or CDs (36%), using the computer by themselves (33%), and loading CD-ROMs (23%); and a few even ask for specific websites while using the Web (12%).

The situation is different for children older than 8 years because the majority of them have TV sets in their own rooms and thus may often have little supervision during television use. Although research in the 1980s found that music listening gained importance during adolescence because teens wish to select and use media by themselves without other family members and could do so with audio media, this may no longer apply. Today, older children and teenagers between 8 and 18 years often have not only tape or CD players (86%) or radios (84%) in their own rooms but also TV sets (68%). Hence, they typically have many choices of content, often further broadened through VCRs, DVD players, and premium TV channels. In addition, half these older children and teenagers have their own electronic gaming devices in their bedrooms, often computers, sometimes with Internet access. Thus, teenagers are certainly no longer restricted to auditory media when they want to choose from media content by themselves. They often can select content at their will when other family members are not present. However, technical devices such as the V-chip and software to restrict Web surfing have been developed to limit minors' choices of media content.

MEDIA CHOICE PATTERNS BY AGE AND GENDER

Research on the actual content choices of children and adolescents encounters severe methodological problems. Very young children are not yet able to report

their likes and dislikes in a survey. Observational studies revealed that children pay more attention to television content that is easily understood. Salient formal features, such as sounds and strong visuals on television, attract the attention even of very small children, as more attention to content features starts around the age of 2 years.

A few experimental studies reviewed or conducted by Knobloch and colleagues presented media choices to preschoolers, who were allowed simply to select what they preferred. American children 2 to 4 years of age were asked to pick from a selection of books those they wanted to have read to them. As expected, girls preferred romantic tales, increasingly so with age. Boys especially liked horror and violent stories. Age did not influence their choices. Moreover, in a study in which videotape covers were presented to preschoolers in Germany, China, and the United States, boys uniformly favored violent entertainment, independent of country and age. Girls, on the other hand, preferred nonviolent videos and chose them more often than did boys. This cross-cultural investigation also found that girls and boys in all countries preferred entertainment featuring protagonists of their own gender. This finding supports the notion that children and teens look at media characters for orientation, as they prefer others like themselves.

A number of studies investigated young media consumers' choices through surveys. For instance, Valkenburg and Janssen found comprehensibility, action, and humor to be the entertainment program features most valued by children between 6 and 11 years. Again, boys were reported to be attracted by action and violence in children's programs, whereas girls attached more value to innocuousness and comprehensibility.

For teenagers, media selection patterns have been investigated along the lines of mood management theory and social perceptions, with an emphasis on music selections. Teens and young adults employ music to regulate and manage their moods. Music preferences, however, also help in forming impressions of others, as well as in presenting the self to others. These social–cognitive processes are based on associations of various traits with music styles and preferences for these styles.

A very important function of music for young people is the rebellion associated with it or explicitly expressed in it. Young people choose to listen to rebellious music to emphasize their identity and to distinguish themselves from authorities. In general, the more young media consumers aim to differentiate themselves from parents and other authorities, the more they are motivated to violate prescribed rules. This is reflected in the so-called forbidden fruit effect: Content that is said to be inappropriate for children or adolescents may instigate their curiosity. Hence, nonconforming choices of media content are an important topic throughout childhood and adolescence.

—Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Mood Management Theory; Movies, Rating Systems and; Movies, Violence in; Parental Advisory Labels and Rating Systems; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Rating Systems, Parental Use of; Selective Exposure; Selectivity; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; Violence, Effects of

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CIGARETTE ADVERTISING, EFFECTS OF

Cigarette smoking continues to be the number one preventable cause of death in the United States. Historically, more than 80% of all smokers began prior to age 18. Extensive research has been conducted on factors influencing the initiation and maintenance of smoking in adolescence, in hopes of identifying ways to decrease smoking behavior in the United States. However, adolescent rates of smoking have remained relatively stable since the mid-1970s, although rates of smoking have been declining slowly since 1997. Research suggests that, every day, an average of 3,000 adolescents become regular smokers, and 6,000 adolescents experiment with smoking.

The role that advertising plays in adolescent initiation of smoking has been an issue since the surgeon general's original report on the dangers of smoking in 1964. A number of studies have been conducted on the role of pro-tobacco advertising on general levels of smoking as well as the influence of tobacco advertising and promotions on adolescent initiation of smoking. At the same time, policymakers have realized that advertising may play an important role in countering smoking behavior. There have been two national anti-smoking advertising campaigns. The first was in the late 1960s. The second is the ongoing Truth campaign that is being conducted by the American Legacy Foundation. In addition, many states have utilized advertising in their anti-smoking campaigns.

PRO-SMOKING ADVERTISING

The amount spent on tobacco marketing increased twofold between 1998 and 2003. In 2003, the tobacco industry spent more than $41 million per day, for a total of more than $15 billion, on tobacco marketing in the United States alone. This spending includes advertising, price discounts, promotional allowances to retailers and wholesalers, bonus cigarettes in cigarette packs, and coupons. Indeed, in terms of money spent in 2003, advertising was not among the top five promotional activities undertaken by the tobacco industry.

The influence of tobacco advertising on tobacco use has long been a concern of policymakers. Critics charge that the tobacco industry has targeted children and adolescents with their advertising campaigns and that these campaigns have resulted in many adolescents becoming smokers. The tobacco industry, on the other hand, argues that their advertising campaigns are aimed at keeping smokers loyal to their brand or convincing other smokers to switch to their brand of cigarettes.

On January 2, 1971, a partial ban on cigarette advertising went into effect in the United States, with cigarette ads banned on television and radio. Many other countries have partial or complete bans on cigarette advertising as well. Additional restrictions were placed on tobacco advertising in the United States in 1998 when the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) was signed between the tobacco industry and the attorneys general of the 46 states that had sued the tobacco industry. This settlement sought to stop the tobacco industry from targeting children and adolescents. In addition, the agreement resulted in the creation of the American Legacy Foundation, which was charged with establishing a nationwide anti-smoking campaign.

Despite the restrictions on advertising and promotions by the tobacco industry, children and adolescents continue to be exposed to cigarette promotions. In a study in New Hampshire and Vermont in the mid-1990s, approximately a third of the high school students owned a cigarette promotional device such as an ashtray, cigarette lighter, or article of clothing. Students who owned these promotional devices were four times more likely to be smokers. A more recent survey conducted in 2001 found that approximately one third of 12-to-17-year-olds reported seeing a print ad for cigarettes in the last month, and a little more than 40% of the adolescents reported exposure to some form of promotion in the last month. Interestingly, only 7% of students in this study reported owning tobacco promotional items, which indicates that the MSA is having some effect on adolescents' exposure to tobacco marketing. However, a disturbing and understudied trend is the use of the Internet to market tobacco products. In 2002, 42.7% of middle school students and 33.5% of high school students reported seeing tobacco products advertised on the Web. In 2004, the percentage of middle school

students seeing tobacco products advertising on the Web had dropped to 34.1%, but the percentage of high school students had climbed to 39.2%.

Three lines of research on the influence of pro-tobacco marketing are discussed in this entry. First, econometric research focuses on aggregate tobacco advertising expenditures and smoking rates. Second, researchers have looked at various indicators of the effects of tobacco advertising on children and adolescents specifically. Finally, some recent research has focused on the effects of susceptibility to tobacco marketing and smoking initiation in adolescents.

Econometric Research

Econometrics research on tobacco advertising has focused on two things: the effects of partial or complete advertising bans on the aggregate demand for tobacco products, and the effect of total monies spent on cigarette advertising on aggregate cigarette demand. Although this research does not focus on adolescent smokers or even on the number of people who actually smoke, it is still informative regarding the effects of tobacco advertising on overall demand for cigarettes.

Studies of the effect of aggregate levels of advertising in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Germany suggest that total expenditures for tobacco marketing explain only a small percentage of tobacco purchases. One estimate predicted that tobacco marketing accounts for as much as 7% of all smoking in Australia, but most estimates run much lower than this upper estimate. However, a study looking specifically at the marketing of cigarettes to women during the 1960s did find a substantial increase in female adolescent smoking rates that corresponded with advertising expenditures. Of course, this increase in smoking among adolescent females may be explained by the feminist movement, with its emphasis on independence—a characteristic that is often associated with smoking.

Research on ad bans has looked at countries with complete bans on tobacco advertising, such as Norway, Finland, Canada, and New Zealand, and partial bans, such as Australia and the United States. Typically, the research has found a small effect of the ad ban on total tobacco consumption, which is consistent with the finding that advertising has a fairly small effect on total demand for cigarettes. Interestingly, the advertising ban in Finland resulted in a 6.7% decrease in demand for cigarettes but a substantial increase of 26% in demand for cigars and pipe tobacco, suggesting that many smokers changed the tobacco product they used as a result of the advertising ban.

A particularly interesting argument concerning the partial cigarette advertising ban in the United States emerged out of the econometric research. One analysis found that the partial ban that went into effect in 1971 indirectly resulted in higher levels of smoking in the United States. Prior to the ban, the Federal Communications Commission had forced the major networks to run 1 minute of anti-smoking public service announcements (PSAs) for every 4 minutes of smoking commercials. This action resulted in the first national anti-smoking media campaign, and this campaign was successful at decreasing smoking. However, when the ad ban went into effect, the networks were no longer required to air the anti-smoking PSAs, and the ban effectively ended the anti-smoking campaign.

The econometric research suggests a small effect of advertising on demand for cigarettes. However, several things that need to be kept in mind regarding this research. First, the research typically focused on demand for cigarettes rather than the number of people smoking. The ad bans may have resulted in lower levels of smoking rather than decreased numbers of people smoking. Second, the econometric research is not concerned with why the ban worked, so little is learned about the psychological effects of cigarette advertising.

Pro-Smoking Advertising, Children, and Adolescents

Studies have explored various effects of cigarette advertising on adolescents and children. For example, studies found that children and adolescents have a good memory for cigarette advertising. Indeed, one study found that adolescent smokers have better memory for cigarette advertisements than do older smokers. Alarmingly, more than 80% of 6-year-old children could accurately identify Joe Camel—the mascot for Camel cigarettes—and this level of recognition was equivalent to the 6-year-old's identification of the Disney Channel icon (mouse ears). Likewise, a study of children between the ages of 6 and 17 in Scotland found that approximately one third of the children could accurately identify which cigarette companies sponsored various sporting events. More disturbingly, the sponsorship of sporting events seemed to influence

children's impressions of the different brands of cigarettes. Even children who did not understand sponsorship associated brands of cigarettes with attributes associated with the sport the brand sponsored, which suggests that cigarette promotions were influencing children's perceptions of smoking and smokers.

Of course, that fact that children have a good memory for advertisements does not mean that the advertisements are leading the children to initiate cigarette smoking. People remember many advertisements that do not influence their buying behaviors. But the research does show that the advertisements are getting through to the children and may be shaping children's perceptions of smoking. Furthermore, the research suggests that cigarette advertising may reinforce adolescents' smoking behavior even if it does not influence their smoking initiation.

Additional research cited as support for a causal relationship between cigarette advertising and adolescent smoking initiation includes a series of studies finding that the most heavily advertised cigarette brands were those most remembered and smoked by teens. This finding suggests that, at a minimum, cigarette advertising is influencing the brand choice of teens. On the other hand, however, the outcome may simply mean that teens are mirroring the adult smoking behaviors they observe.

Finally, a study in Australia found that middle school students who judged that cigarette advertisements made them want to smoke were more likely to be smokers 2 years later. This study estimated that cigarette advertisements were responsible for a 15% increase in adolescent smoking. On the other hand, those adolescents who judged cigarette advertisements as persuasive may already be forming intentions to begin smoking, so it is unclear whether the study actually measured the effect of cigarette advertisements on children's decision to smoke or whether the advertisements reinforced children who had already decided to smoke.

Receptivity to Tobacco Promotions

Receptivity to tobacco promotions is a measure developed in the mid-1990s to explore the effects of cigarette promotions on adolescent smoking. A five-item scale is used to measure receptivity to tobacco promotions. The questions focus on adolescents' ownership of or willingness to use cigarette promotional items, ability to name cigarette brands advertised, and ability to name the brand featured in their favorite cigarette ad. Studies have found that adolescents who are more receptive to tobacco marketing are more likely to be current smokers. Indeed, research suggests that receptive teens are four times more likely to be smokers. Of course, this finding is somewhat obvious in that we would expect smokers to be more willing to use smoking promotional items and to pay more attention to cigarette advertisements.

Several longitudinal studies have explored whether nonsmoking teens who are receptive to tobacco promotions are more likely to become smokers. These studies had lags of 21 months to 5 years between the initial measure of receptivity to tobacco promotions and follow-up measures to see whether the adolescents had either experimented with smoking or had become regular smokers. The longitudinal studies found that nonsmokers who were more receptive to tobacco promotions were more likely to experiment with smoking or to become established smokers than were nonsmoking adolescents who were not receptive to smoking. Indeed, one study estimated that 34% of experimenting with cigarettes was due to receptivity to tobacco promotions.

These longitudinal studies provide the best evidence to date that cigarette promotions influence adolescent smoking initiation. However, several problems with this research must be considered. There are numerous factors that influence adolescent smoking initiation. For example, having friends or family who smoke is consistently the strongest predictor of smoking initiation among adolescents. Interestingly, having family or peers who smoke is also strongly related to receptivity to tobacco promotions. Maybe receptivity is a by-product of having friends who smoke (and who also have promotional items and talk about ads), so that the real culprit is peer smoking behavior. Likewise, research has suggested that teens who are receptive to tobacco promotions have already decided to smoke and that their receptivity to tobacco promotions is a consequence of trying to learn more about smoking. According to this interpretation, the promotions may still play an important role in smoking initiation by reinforcing the adolescents' decision to begin smoking. Unfortunately, the research on receptivity to tobacco promotions is still fairly new, and more extensive studies are necessary to understand how receptivity interfaces with other factors that influence adolescent smoking, such as peer smoking.

ANTI-SMOKING ADVERTISING

The first nationwide anti-smoking advertising campaign began in the late 1960s and ended in 1971 when the partial ban on cigarette advertising went into effect. The research on teen smoking clearly shows that media campaigns can work. However, the research also suggests that media campaigns are more effective as part of a larger campaign that involves many different elements, including schools, community leaders, policy changes (such as indoor smoking restrictions), enforced restrictions on access to cigarettes, and taxes on tobacco products. Campaigns in Massachusetts, California, Mississippi, and Florida are examples of successful comprehensive anti-smoking campaigns.

Do the successful statewide campaigns indicate what kinds of messages are likely to be effective in combating teen smoking? There are many different anti-smoking appeals that can be used to counter adolescent initiation of smoking. Many of these strategies have been found to be effective in various campaigns. However, the statewide campaigns often involve several different themes that make it difficult to isolate which theme(s) are working. For example, the early California campaign included two major themes: the dangers of secondhand smoke and attacks on the tobacco industry. Because both themes were featured, it is impossible to establish whether one or both themes were primarily responsible for the early decrease in adolescent smoking rates in California.

However, experimental studies on the effectiveness of different types of anti-smoking ads with middle school and high school nonsmokers suggest that the dangers of secondhand smoke, social norm appeals, cosmetic appeals, and long-term health appeals work best with this audience. However, more research is necessary before any kind of scientific consensus can be reached on which appeals work best with adolescents. Indeed, there probably will never be such a consensus, because a successful campaign probably requires the utilization of many, if not most, of the different kinds of anti-smoking appeals. It is clear that more research is necessary for a better understanding of how the different appeals work and which appeals are more effective with particular adolescent audiences, and for identification of new appeals. It is also clear that there is no single effective way to prevent youth smoking. However, the evidence does show that different approaches can be effective.

The 1998 MSA with the tobacco industry resulted in the establishment of the American Legacy Foundation (ALF). ALF was charged with creating and overseeing a national anti-smoking campaign. ALF's Truth campaign is an ongoing national media campaign targeting high-risk adolescents. The campaign is primarily a countermarketing campaign focused on changing adolescents' attitudes toward the tobacco industry and on increasing adolescents' media literacy regarding tobacco marketing. The three primary themes across the different Truth campaigns are the tobacco industry's manipulative marketing to adolescents, the addictive nature of nicotine, and the long-term health consequences of smoking. An interesting component of the early part of the campaign was the desire to create a "truth" brand. Teenagers are very attentive to brand names. Consequently, if the campaign could create a brand that was anti-smoking and anti-tobacco industry, ALF felt that the campaign would be more effective. The campaign has clearly been very effective in creating a truth brand.

Has the ALF's Truth campaign been effective in decreasing teen smoking? The campaign has clearly influenced adolescent attitudes toward the tobacco industry. Teens who report greater exposure to the campaign also hold more negative attitudes toward the tobacco industry. However, do these attitudes translate into lower smoking rates? At this point, the data are unclear. Several studies published in 2002 suggest that the campaign had effects on adolescents' self-reported intentions to smoke. Two studies published in 2005 indicate that the campaign made adolescents less susceptible to tobacco marketing, which led to decreases in adolescent smoking rates.

Although the Truth campaign has been successful in changing adolescents' attitudes toward the tobacco industry and appears to have had an effect on actual smoking rates, three factors are important to consider when evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign. First, one of the 2005 studies found a curvilinear relationship between exposure to the campaign and declining smoking rates during the campaign. This result, if accurate, indicates that increased exposure to the campaign worked *up to a point* but that heavy exposure to the campaign may have actually backfired and was associated with higher levels of adolescent smoking. Second, although the campaign has had some effect, the effect is modest given the total resources provided to the ALF by the MSA. Although the limited effect of the campaign is disappointing, it should not be

surprising, because the campaign was not part of a comprehensive anti-smoking campaign. Prior research clearly demonstrates that anti-smoking media campaigns work best when they are run in conjunction with other anti-smoking programs, most notably school-based programs. Third, the long-term effects of the campaign are unclear because the funding provided by the tobacco industry as stipulated by the MSA has ended. Consequently, the Truth campaign will probably be much smaller in the future. In a similar situation, Minnesota's anti-smoking campaign was dramatically cut back in July 2003, and within 6 months of the end of the campaign, adolescent susceptibility to begin smoking had increased dramatically.

Adolescents continue to begin smoking at alarming rates. Many factors play a role in adolescent initiation of smoking. More research is necessary to understand how these factors interact with tobacco advertising to influence adolescent smoking. Fortunately, the media can play a critical role in combating teen smoking when used in conjunction with larger comprehensive programs. California is an example of how successful a multifaceted campaign can be at changing the prevalence of smoking and the cultural acceptability of smoking.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also: Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Health and; Advertising, Market Size and; Advertising, Regulation of; Branding; Cigarette Advertising, History of; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in; Tobacco Advertising, International

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CIGARETTE ADVERTISING, HISTORY OF

Cigarette marketers have appealed to young people with many obvious practices, such as the use of youthful models, ads in media the audience of which is

exclusively or predominantly young, copy and art known to be attractive and interpretable to children (cartoons), and placement of ads in familiar contexts (such as cigarette ads in video games and candy cigarettes). However, advertising appeals to young people are not always so obvious. On the basis of careful research, advertisers have targeted youth with appeals designed to match their psychological needs and aspirations. For example, images of independence appeal to youth's need for independence. Similarly, advertising and promotion often pair cigarettes with things of great interest to the young, such as automobiles, other motor sports, popular music, and movies. Heavy media buying, coupled with in-store and on-street signage, can make a product attractive simply by virtue of being so well recognized that it becomes familiar and trusted. Ads to the young are not intended to be informative by voluntarily disclosing the risks of addiction or the many diseases and disabilities, such as impotence, to which smoking can lead. Indeed, because of the identity needs of adolescents, this age group may be particularly responsive to ads connoting style and symbolic product personality attributes, so ads make these appeals and do not offer any negative information about the product.

The young are a vital target market for the cigarette industry. Most smokers start as adolescents, and the addictive nature of nicotine leads to phenomenally high rates of brand loyalty among smokers. Cigarette companies need to replace smokers who quit, so getting replacement starters is important to them. Moreover, the deadly consequences of smoking create a chronic and substantial need to replace smokers who die. This combination of factors leads naturally to a strategic interest in replacement starters, as brands able to attract starters will enjoy the profitability of their brand loyalties for many years, sometimes for a lifetime. It is not surprising, therefore, that cigarette advertising has long been suspected of intentionally appealing to the young.

Industry documents now coming to light in courtroom trials show that firms have researched children as young as 11, 12 and 13 years, with target audiences starting at age 15. Images of independence and freedom from authority were used to capitalize upon the psychological needs of young starters. Crafting and pretesting ensured that the ad images were not too immature, lest the brand be rejected by teens seeking symbols of adulthood, and the activities not too aerobic, lest this be laughably unbelievable. Some ads stressed peer group acceptance, belonging, and security.

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

At least since the 1920s, legislators and public heath officials have been concerned that advertising is "deliberate propaganda" creating an unnecessary appetite for smoking in young men and women. Cigarette firms, of course, vehemently deny that they have ever engaged in practices that targeted minors, but the historical record contradicts this. Magazine editors writing about business and advertising in the 1950s certainly saw advertising as "growing the market" by successfully recruiting children. Over the years, companies have used a variety of media to reach the youth market.

Popular Music

Cigarette firms were bold pioneers in the use of radio and, later, TV as advertising media. Cigarette firms sponsored musical shows such as Lucky Strike's *Your Hit Parade,* which reviewed the top popular music hits of the week. Many famous big bands popular with the young—such as those led by Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Paul Whiteman, Artie Shaw, and Tommy Dorsey—were sponsored on radio. In the 1940s, market research firms employed by cigarette firms studied the radio preferences and the musical shows and styles that appealed to "boys and girls." In the 1960s, cigarette firms bought a lot of ads on popular music programs that aired on radio in the afternoon just after school.

Comics, Cartoons, and the Circus

Kids were advertised to in the Sunday comics, TV cartoons, and circus programs, and even on school book covers and football programs. Several major firms advertised in *Puck: The Comic Weekly,* a syndicated collection that reached "virtually all the kids." Many cigarette brands sponsored cartoons, as Winston sponsored *The Flintstones* on television. Some created new comic strips just to promote their brands. One brand used Frosty the Snowman to sell cigarettes. Another firm had ads on plastic-coated book covers distributed in 8,000 high schools. Clowns and advertising in circus programs reached "children of all ages," and cigarette firms paid to be used in jokes by clowns in the Ringling Brothers' Barnum & Bailey Circus. In the 1990s, Camels were sold using a cartoon, Joe Camel, whose face was thought by some to look a lot like a boy's private parts. Researchers

showed that even preschoolers were aware of the Joe Camel campaign and that it was particularly well known and popular with the 12-to-14-year-olds.

Television

When TV became big in the 1950s, cigarette firms were very heavy sponsors, advertising on shows with young audiences such as *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, *The Horace Heidt Amateur Hour* (a talent audition like today's *American Idol*), and *Your Hit Parade,* among many, many others. A cigarette brand sponsored the American debut of The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Programs such as *The Flintstones* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*, the audiences of which were nearly half minors, were sponsored by cigarette brands. There was so much TV advertising for cigarette in the 1960s that the average teenager saw more than 1,000 TV ads for cigarettes every year; preteens, those ages 2 to 12, saw nearly as many. This made teenagers appear to be the prime target for TV cigarette advertising.

Sports

Cigarette brands sponsored most baseball broadcasts, the National Football League, college all-star games, and even the Olympics. Marlboro gave prizes to the "Rookie of the Year," and sports superstars such as Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Frank Gifford, Joe DiMaggio, and Hank Aaron appeared in ads endorsing cigarettes, as did many other professional athletes, especially Major League baseball players.

Candy Cigarettes

Five different manufacturers of candy made candy cigarettes that closely imitated most popular brands, and this practice continued into the 1980s without the cigarette firms ever taking legal action against the obvious infringement of their copyrights. In similar copyright infringements, cigarette ads appeared in video arcade games.

Movies

Moviegoing, highly popular with dating teenagers, attracted cigarette posters placed in movie theaters, ads in free magazines, and ads shown before movies, including one showing a rerun of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Movie producers were paid to rewrite scripts to include shots of cigarette billboards and to make nonsmokers into smokers. Superman's girlfriend, Lois Lane, was turned into a smoker for *Superman II*.

Driving Passions

Marlboro and other brands capture the driving passions of the young by sponsoring racing drivers, teams, events, and whole series for a wide variety of vehicles: Formula One cars, Indy cars, road rallies, speedboats, drag racing, the GT and GTO series, motorcycles, monster trucks, and stock cars. One campaign that drew much criticism for its copy was Lucky Strike's campaign slogan, "Luckies separate the men from the boys, but not from the girls." A typical ad showed a young man looking longingly at a mature man, such as race car driver, simultaneously enjoying a cigarette, a victory trophy, and the admiration of an attractive woman.

Marlboro's Independence

Marlboro's success among the young is due in large part to the mythology of the cowboy in its image-based advertising. Marlboro was once sold as a female product with the slogan "Mild as May." After spending a small fortune on consulting psychologists and market research, the durable cowboy of Marlboro Country, with his rugged individualism, became the perfect symbol of independence and individualistic rebellion, well suited to the teenage desire to be grown up and independent, free from parents and teachers. The Marlboro man is consistently portrayed in ways that emphasize his independence. He is almost always alone and is never subject to any authority whatsoever or even in its presence. There are no parents, no older brothers, no foremen, and no bullies in Marlboro Country. Marlboro Country doesn't even have a sheriff! The power of this image advertising has been demonstrated by Marlboro's success in capturing the biggest share of starters every year, starters whose brand loyalty soon made Marlboro the best seller overall.

Virginia Slims

The stunning success of Marlboro advertising led Philip Morris to launch a second brand with the imagery of independence, this one with a female personality: Virginia Slims. As with Marlboros, careful research was done, leading to the pseudoliberated

slogan, "You've Come a Long Way, Baby." One ad executive stated that they wanted to tap the emerging independence and self-fulfillment of women to make smoking a way of expressing that.

CREATING "FRIENDLY FAMILIARITY"

Massive spending—more than $15 billion in the United States during 2003, according to the Federal Trade Commission—supports advertising and promotional activity to sell cigarettes. Until recently, cigarette and brand sponsorship advertising and signage was in many magazines, on billboards, on the interiors and exteriors of buses, in subways and transit shelters, through sports sponsorships, in sports stadia, on T-shirts and baseball caps, and in many other places. In retail stores, it appears on clocks, store-hour signs, retail displays, change trays, window decals, signage, posters, ashtrays, waste receptacles, shopping baskets, and pushcarts.

The result of pervasive and persistent cigarette merchandising and sponsorship advertising is that generations of young consumers have grown up immersed in an environment dense with cigarette advertising imagery. Each individual is likely to be exposed on a frequent and regular basis to all the common types of cigarette messages, whether images of independence, social approval, pictures of health, or other implied health reassurances. The net effect of this virtual omnipresence is what Marlboro ad agent Leo Burnett called "friendly familiarity," a judgment that the product cannot be all that bad because it seems to be such an accepted commonplace in society.

The conspicuous and persistent presence of advertising for tobacco products gives the impression, especially to children, that tobacco use is desirable, socially acceptable, and prevalent. It leads to the understandable but erroneous rationalization of consumers that "it can't be all that bad, since governments and the courts permit its promotion." The familiarity effect, wherein things encountered frequently are trusted as benign, just as the unfamiliar evokes suspicion, has become well recognized and researched in psychology since it was labeled by Burnett.

Industry observers noted that cigarette ads often portray and seem to be pitched directly at young people and that nowhere in that bright, wonderful world depicted in cigarette ads was there any hint that cigarettes might be harmful. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers described cigarette advertising as "smokewashing," invoking a parallel with psychological brainwashing.

The result of all of this advertising is that smoking is made to seem universally acceptable, attractive, and desirable. It affected the teenagers' judgments of the number of people who smoked, the status and social approval that smokers received, and the health of smokers. Cigarette advertising by its very nature inevitably glamorizes smoking, potentially influencing the young by shaping their perceptions that many attractive people are smokers, that smokers appear to be healthy, that smokers obtain social approval for their smoking, and that smokers are especially independent and self-reliant (despite their nicotine addiction). Teens, especially those depressed or unsure of their identity, are very susceptible to the images of romance, success, sophistication, popularity, and adventure that advertising suggests they can achieve by smoking cigarettes. Cigarette ads intentionally appeal to the adolescent need for independence. They also communicate to youth that cigarettes can be props for displaying what seems to be an attractive identity and maturity.

—Richard W. Pollay

See also Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Health and; Advertising, Market Size and; Advertising, Regulation of; Branding; Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in; Tobacco Advertising, International

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CIGARETTE ADVERTISING, INTERNATIONAL

See TOBACCO ADVERTISING, INTERNATIONAL

CIGARETTE USE, MUSIC VIDEOS AND

Although few studies on tobacco and cigarette use among adolescents have analyzed the use of tobacco products in music videos, a few focused investigations of music videos and tobacco usage have been conducted. These studies indicate that more than a fifth of music videos portray individuals smoking. Other research has dealt with the extent to which youth and adolescents watch music videos. Although the amount of exposure to music television reported by these investigations differs rather substantially, nevertheless it is clear that children and adolescents spend a great deal of time watching music videos. Repeated, regular exposure to poignant and credible multimedia materials by adolescents who are at critical stages of their socialization enhances the likelihood that depictions of tobacco use by media figures they idolize will influence the attitudes, morals, values, and behaviors of young music television viewers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), every day in the United States alone nearly 4,400 young people between the ages of 12 and 17 years begin to smoke cigarettes, and every day approximately 2,000 other adolescents become regular, daily cigarette smokers. Among U.S. high school students, 22.9% are current cigarette smokers, with regular smoking relatively equally divided by gender (male = 24.6%, female = 21.2%). Among middle school students, 10.1% are current smokers (10.2% males, 10.0% females). For both age groups, Caucasians smoke at a slightly higher rate than Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans. If such trends continue, the CDC projects that 6.4 million people currently under 18 will die prematurely from a tobacco-related disease. Such diseases include cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses, as well as lung, larynx, esophageal, and oral cancers.

A mid-1980s study of music videos found narcotics, stimulants, and other substances in 24% of the music videos on MTV. Almost a decade later, another study found that tobacco use was incorporated in 25.7% of the music videos on MTV. The latter study also found that the lead singer in the video was twice as likely to smoke, compared to a backup singer or other musician. Moreover, in music videos in which smoking was portrayed, young adults did 76% of the puffing. Ninety percent of the videos that featured smoking depicted at least one male smoking, and 41% portrayed at least one female smoking. In terms of smoking by music genre, 30.1% of the videos depicting smoking were of rap music.

A 21st-century study of tobacco use in music videos found a very modest decrease in frequency of smoking in music videos. Of the 258 videos analyzed, 21% had some sort of visual reference to tobacco. Of those videos showing tobacco use, 18% showed explicit tobacco use; moreover, 9% showed tobacco being used by lead characters or band members, whereas 13% featured tobacco consumption by secondary characters. In terms of the specific tobacco products consumed, cigarettes were shown in 60% and cigars were shown in 51% of the videos featuring tobacco products. Differences were found by music television networks and by music genre. Tobacco use was featured in 32% of videos on BET, 16% on VH1, and 11% on MTV. Analyzing by genre, tobacco appeared in 23% of rap and hip-hop videos, 18% of mainstream rock music, 17% of Hot-100 videos, and 18% of modern rock videos. Another important finding was that, when substances were portrayed, more often than not they seemed to be common elements of everyday activity—what people naturally do when they socialize. Smoking seldom led to consequences of any other kind (either positive or negative), and lead characters frequently used tobacco products.

Music television is an important medium in adolescents' lives. A 1997 Annenberg Public Policy Center survey found that 53% of 10-to-17-year-olds watch MTV regularly. A study from a decade earlier had found that 80% of 9th-to-12th-graders watch the channel, with an average viewing time of 2 hours per day. A 1996 study reported that 73% of boys and 78% of girls between 12 and 19 years of age watch MTV. Although the amount of exposure to music television reported by these investigations differs rather substantially, it is clear that children and adolescents spend a great deal of time watching music videos. Furthermore, 19% of all teens (and 32% of African American teens) have reported that music videos are

one of their most influential sources for finding out about new trends. Such repeated, regular exposure to poignant and credible multimedia materials by adolescents who are at critical stages of their socialization enhances the likelihood that depictions of tobacco use by media figures they idolize will influence the attitudes, morals, values, and behaviors of young music television viewers.

—Andrea Holt and Jennings Bryant

See also Cigarette Advertising, History of; Cigarette Use in Television and Movies; Music Videos, Effects of

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CIGARETTE USE IN TELEVISION AND MOVIES

Historically, tobacco companies have garnered considerable publicity for various cigarette brands through *product placement,* which entails efforts to have product exposure during television shows and movies. Philip Morris, for example, had product placement arrangements for the movies *License to Kill* (featuring James Bond) and *Superman II.* Internal tobacco industry documents, made available to the public from litigation, reveal that in 1983 Brown and Williamson agreed to pay $500,000 to actor Sylvester Stallone in exchange for his smoking the company's brands in a minimum of five feature films. Payments toward promoting tobacco products in television shows and movies are now prohibited in accordance with the 1998 U.S. Master Settlement Agreement, but many public health groups remain concerned about the continued frequency of tobacco depictions and how tobacco use is commonly portrayed, given the impact those positive smoking messages might have on adolescent initiation. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified tobacco portrayals in the movies as a major factor in adolescent smoking.

Content analysis is a commonly used research method for examining tobacco use frequency and portrayals in television shows and movies. For studies pertaining to television shows, prime-time programming has been the typical sampling frame, although some studies account for music videos, programming during Saturday-morning hours, corresponding commercials, fictional series and soap operas with the highest ratings, and programming shown on a public television network. For studies that assess tobacco use portrayals in film, "top-grossing" movies are usually selected to generate a sampling frame, yet a few studies have focused on children's animated films.

TOBACCO USE PORTRAYALS IN TELEVISION SHOWS

The frequency and nature of tobacco use portrayals have often been compared to alcohol use portrayals. Study findings reveal that tobacco is infrequently depicted compared to alcohol in television programming. Bradley Greenberg and colleagues, for example, analyzed the usage of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs during the prime-time and Saturday-morning hours of the 1976–1977 and 1977–1978 television seasons. They found that, for both seasons, alcohol accounted for greater than two thirds of all coded substance depictions. Tobacco use incidents occurred on average 0.7 times per hour during the 1976–1977 season, whereas tobacco was depicted 0.48 times per hour during the 1977–1978 season, thus indicating that viewers typically watched 2 hours of television programming before observing a character smoke a cigarette, cigar, or pipe.

William McEwen and Gerhard Hanneman assessed prime-time television programming and found that, although tobacco use was not common among major characters, the way in which it was portrayed was noteworthy. No characters were observed to refuse tobacco, and the consequences of usage were rarely emphasized. The most frequently classified tone of tobacco incidents was humorous. Moreover, Jon Cruz and Lawrence Wallack found in their study that, for observed smoking acts, nearly two thirds of smokers were lead characters, and 70% were cast in strong and

enduring roles. Only one incident was observed in which it was evident that a smoker may desire to quit.

Warren Breed and James De Foe assessed the portrayal of drinking and smoking for situation comedies and dramatic prime-time programming from 1950 to 1982. They found that cigarette use steadily dropped during this time frame (by a factor of 6 in situation comedies and by greater than 12 in dramas). Cigarette acts were more frequently depicted within dramatic programming for all time periods. Interestingly, cigarettes were lit for 94% of the acts, whereas the remaining cigarette acts were classified as "prepared" to smoke. During the 1950–1963 time frame, several types of adult characters (including heroes, heroines, and villains) were depicted smoking. From 1964 to 1970, some primary characters and stars were still seen smoking, yet during the 1971–1977 time period smokers were typically villains or insecure characters. Scenes parodying cigarettes became apparent during the 1981–1982 time frame. Smoking depictions among doctors dramatically declined over the 33-year span.

Nevertheless, despite decades of declining tobacco frequency rates, more recent studies suggest an upswing in tobacco representations for television shows from the 1990s. Anna Hazan and Stanton Glantz examined fictional prime-time programming during the fall of 1992 and found that 24% of episodes included at least one tobacco event. Overall, 0.99 tobacco events were apparent during each hour of television programming. In drama programs, 1.13 tobacco events occurred per hour, whereas in comedies there were 0.86 events per hour. Smokers were predominantly male (outnumbering female smokers by more than a three-to-one ratio), white (78%), and middle class (42%). The researchers classified 92% of tobacco events as "pro-tobacco," and "good-guy" smokers (55%) outnumbered "bad-guy" smokers (45%).

TOBACCO USE PORTRAYALS IN MOVIES

Annemarie Charlesworth and Stanton Glantz provide a comprehensive overview of the literature pertaining to tobacco use portrayals in the movies. William McIntosh and colleagues, for example, analyzed 100 popular movies spanning 5 decades (1940–1989). They found that 21% of characters smoked at least once during the observed films and that smoking frequency among characters reached a high during the 1950s and a low during the 1980s. Characters who smoked were depicted as more sexually active and romantic than nonsmoking characters.

Anna Hazan, Helene Lipton, and Stanton Glantz assessed feature-length, top-grossing U.S. films from 1960 through 1990. Their key findings were these:

1. The overall rate of tobacco use remained virtually unchanged (despite a significant decline in smoking rates among the general U.S. population).
2. Smoking groups became larger, and smoking alone declined.
3. Smoking involving relatively young people (aged 18 to 29) increased.
4. Business activities were customarily the most popular smoking context.
5. Smoking by minor characters became more common, whereas smoking by major characters became less frequent.
6. Smoking was increasingly associated with hostility and stress reduction.

Furthermore, a gradual, consistent drop in the presence of ashtrays was noted. They found that, overall, films typically depicted smokers as middle class, successful, attractive, white, and male. Stanton Glantz, Karen Kacirk, and Charles McCulloch then extended this research by adding a random sample of films released during the 1950s and up to 2002. The rate of tobacco use per minute of film had reached a minimum during the 1980s but increased during the 1990s and early 2000s, reaching levels comparable to the 1950s.

Finally, Adam Goldstein, Rachel Sobel, and Glen Newman examined the prevalence of tobacco and alcohol use in children's animated films that were released between 1937 and 1997. They found that 56% of the films portrayed tobacco use, including all seven animated movies released during 1996 and 1997. Cigars were the most commonly depicted type of tobacco, followed by cigarettes and pipes, respectively. A diverse number of characters were associated with cigars, whereas cigarettes were often reserved for independent, sexy characters, and pipes typically denoted wise, sweet, or older characters. Since 1992, a trend has emerged that characters using tobacco were more commonly classified as good. While more than two thirds of animated films featured tobacco or alcohol use, none of them contained verbal messages about the negative, long-term health consequences of tobacco use or alcohol abuse.

Studies have assessed the frequency of smoking depictions in television shows and movies and have examined who is likely to smoke and how they are portrayed. Directors and producers may use cigarette smoke to enhance atmosphere, depth, or distance, or to focus attention toward a character's face. The cigarette is a classic *floating signifier,* indicating that cigarettes may be used to express a wide variety of meanings (both positive and negative), depending on the context of the situation and the character being developed or depicted. As with television, after decades of declining rates of tobacco depictions, more recent studies suggest an upswing in tobacco representations for movies from the 1990s and early 2000s, which contradicted smoking prevalence rates observed in society at large. When tobacco use is portrayed, negative consequences (i.e., the adverse social or health effects) rarely seem to be emphasized.

—Timothy Dewhirst

See also Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Cigarette Advertising, History of; Cigarette Use, Music Videos and; Movies, Substance Use in; Product Placements, Cigarettes; Tobacco Advertising, International

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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, MEDIA AND

Parents are often surprised at the way in which their child responds to a particular television show or movie. A 6-year-old, for example, may focus more on a character's pretty dress than on what the character is doing in a given scene. Or a 4-year-old may beg to watch the same movie on DVD for a third time in a row. These examples underscore how important it is to consider how children make sense of the media. As children mature, they develop different cognitive skills and strategies for understanding the world. Consequently, a preschooler is likely to have a very different reaction to the same program than an older sister or brother would. Since the early 1980s, media researchers have increasingly recognized the need to adopt a developmental perspective when studying young people's responses to the media. In doing so, studies have used principles of cognitive development to explore age differences in how children interpret and react emotionally to media content.

THEORIES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

In the most basic sense, *cognitive development* refers to what a child knows and thinks and to how those mental processes or cognitions develop over time. When a child encounters a media message, he or she must engage in a number of mental operations. For example, when watching a television program, the child must first allocate attention to the multiple auditory and visual cues on the screen. This process is made more complex by the need to simultaneously tune out distracting cues in the environment, such as a talkative sibling or friend. Next, the child must sequence the major events or pieces of information into a story. Most television programs have plots and subplots that must be disentangled and ordered. Third, the child needs to draw inferences from the implicit cues in the program. Television shows jump from location to location, activities occur in the plot but are not always depicted on screen, and characters have dreams and fantasies that require "reading between the lines" to fill in missing information. Fourth, the child must draw on prior experiences and

acquired knowledge already stored in memory to help make sense of the program. For instance, a child who has visited New York City will have a better understanding of a news story featuring the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center than will a child who has never left the state of Wisconsin. Finally, the child will evaluate the television program in some way. All of these tasks require cognitive skills and energy.

Several influential theories of cognitive development have been used to predict and explain changes in how children process the media. Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development posits that children progress through stages of cognitive growth that apply universally to all children. Piaget argued that each stage is a precursor to the next and that the stages reflect qualitative differences in cognitive structures. The sensorimotor stage (0–2 years) involves knowing the world through overt behaviors such as sucking or grasping. The preoperational stage (2–7 years) involves the first use of symbols, such as words and other simple representations, to signify objects and events. The concrete operational stage (7–11 years) involves the ability to use mental operations or routines to think about objects and events in the world. And the formal operational stage (11+ years) involves the ability to employ highly abstract mental operations, such as hypothetical and logical reasoning, to problem solving. Media researchers such as Patti Valkenburg and Joanne Cantor have used these stages to predict, for example, how a preoperational child might respond differently from a concrete operational child to advertising and to frightening programs.

Some developmental psychologists have criticized Piaget's theory on the grounds that his stages are too rigid to account for the variation that often exists in a child's abilities across different domains and topics. The information processing approach is a more recent perspective in developmental psychology that focuses more on the steps involved in cognitive processing than on cognitive structures per se. Information processing theories attempt to identify the precise mental processes that occur when a child encounters, transforms, and stores information in memory in response to the environment. Researchers using this framework examine how children encode information, what types of mnemonic strategies children use to store and retrieve information, how children develop mental scripts and schemas to represent information in memory, and how mental capacity to engage in such cognitive tasks develops over time. In the realm of media, researchers have used information processing to explore the impact of violent programming on the development of aggressive scripts in children's memory, children's comprehension of educational programs such as *Sesame Street,* and children's recall of news stories in the media.

Whether children's development is described by stages or by computer simulations, it is certainly complex and often uneven. One day, a child may appear unusually mature as he or she pours over websites about the planets, and the next day the same child may become engrossed in an animated cartoon like *SpongeBob SquarePants.* One way to conceptualize development, then, is to think about broad shifts in cognitive processing rather than abrupt and fixed stages at specific points in time. Some of these shifts occur during the transition from early (2–7 years) to middle childhood (8–12 years), and others occur during the transition from middle childhood to adolescence (13–17 years). The cognitive shifts described below are particularly relevant for understanding how children interact with media.

EARLY TO MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

From Perceptual to Conceptual Processing

Preschoolers pay very close attention to how things look and sound. This characteristic has been labeled *perceptual boundedness* by psychologist Jerome Bruner. For example, children below the age of 6 or 7 typically group objects by color or shape. As they grow older, they focus more on conceptual properties, such as the functions that objects share. Applying this idea to the media, research shows that younger children pay strong visual attention to salient features of a television program, such as animation, lively music, and sound effects. As children progress to middle childhood, they become more selective in their attention, searching for cues that are meaningful to the plot rather than those that are mesmerizing.

From Perceived Appearance to Reality

Another cognitive skill that develops during childhood is the ability to discriminate fantasy from reality. Very young children often attribute life to

inanimate objects and have imaginary friends, reflecting their naïveté about what is real. In fact, preschoolers will readily talk to the television screen and wave to characters. In one study by John Flavell and his colleagues, many of the 3-year-olds reported that a bowl of popcorn depicted on television would spill if the set were turned upside down. By age 4 or 5, children begin to understand that what is on television is a representation of real life, but they tend to assume that what *looks* real is real. In other words, they look for striking violations of physical reality to make judgments. Therefore, cartoons are likely to be judged as unreal simply because the characters are animated. Yet, animated characters can still be potent role models for younger aged children, reflecting the fragile nature of reality judgments in early childhood.

By age 7 or 8, children begin to use multiple criteria for judging reality in the media. They are able to consider the genre of the program, production techniques, and even the source of the message. Older children are most likely to judge a program, a movie, or even a videogame as realistic if it depicts characters and events that are *possible* in the real world.

From Concrete to Inferential Thinking

A final cognitive trend that has implications for the media is the shift from concrete to inferential thinking. Younger children tend to focus on information that is fairly explicit and tangible. Therefore, they are more likely to focus on a character's behaviors, which are fairly salient and concrete in nature, than on a character's motives. Yet, full comprehension of most media messages requires an ability to extract information that is implied but not explicitly presented. For example, television series require viewers to track and connect multiple storylines in an episode, websites do not overtly reveal their commercial purposes, and even video games convey implicit information about space and time. By age 8 or 9, children show dramatic improvements in their ability to link scenes and subplots together and to infer causal and time-order connections from media content.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD TO ADOLESCENCE

From the Real to the Plausible

As described above, older elementary school children use a variety of cues to judge reality, but in the end they tend to focus on whether an event or character is *possible* in real life. As children move toward the teenage years, they become even more discriminating, judging media content as realistic only if it is *probable* or likely to occur in real life. This trend is consistent with adolescents' ability to engage in more abstract and probabilistic thinking, as outlined in Piaget's stage theory. In support of this idea, one study by Barbara Wilson and her colleagues found that teens were less frightened by stories of child kidnapping featured in the news than were older elementary school children, presumably because adolescents are capable of discounting such events as unlikely to happen to them.

From Empirical to Hypothetical Reasoning

A related shift that occurs between middle childhood and adolescence is from empirical to hypothetical reasoning. Older children are capable of conceptual reasoning, but it is often tied closely to observable information. So, for example, they may be able to draw inferences from a plot, but they are likely to have difficulty imagining alternative scenarios. In contrast, adolescents are increasingly able to comprehend abstract concepts, use formal logic, and think about hypothetical outcomes. Thus, teens can think more flexibly about media stories, conjure up alternative interpretations, and critique media content in terms of its source and its intended target.

Metacognitive Thinking

Metacognition refers to the ability to understand and alter one's own thought processes. Younger and even older children have difficulty considering their own cognitive processing, in part because it requires so much mental energy just to track the environment. But as they move toward adolescence, cognitive skills become more routinized, and higher-order thinking is possible. Teens and adults are often able to contemplate their own feelings and reactions to a situation at the same time that they are also processing what is happening in the environment. Thus, a teenager is more likely than a child to realize that loud music can interfere with the ability to read a complex novel. A teen will also be better able to monitor his or her emotional reactions to an upsetting movie or news story, and can even engage in "self talk" to reduce anxiety. Adolescents' awareness of the demands of

different media can affect the depth of processing they will use and in turn can increase their comprehension of complex material.

To summarize, cognitive shifts that occur during childhood and adolescence have important implications for how youth will respond to the media. When watching a violent TV program about a superhero, for example, a preschooler is likely to focus on the most striking perceptual features in the show, such as the way the hero looks and what he does. The preschooler also will perceive the program as fairly realistic, will mostly remember the violent actions displayed, and will have difficulty tracking the plot over time. An older child, in contrast, would appreciate more conceptual aspects of the program, such as the superhero's motives, his feelings, and even how other characters respond to him. An older child would also be able to track the main plot and any subplots in the episode. And the older child would likely discount the program as unrealistic because of the superhero's abnormal powers. Adolescents, on the other hand, would probably find such a program uninteresting. If they tuned in, they would be capable of criticizing the program at a more abstract level, looking at how gender or race is portrayed or how violence is reinforced as a problem-solving technique. They could also imagine alternative plot configurations. Clearly, developmental factors related to cognition are crucial in appreciating how a child will respond to a particular media experience.

—Barbara J. Wilson

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Advertising, Viewer Age and; Consumer Development, Phases of; Developmental Differences, Media and; Fear Reactions

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COGNITIVE SCRIPT THEORY

Cognitive script theory refers to hypothesized knowledge structures that outline how everyday events unfold. Roger C. Shank and Robert Abelson's early work on script theory explores how these mental structures organize knowledge and inform our understanding of the world. Most media research on cognitive scripts has applied L. Rowell Huesmann's information processing model to explain how television content can influence children's behavior.

DEFINITION OF COGNITIVE SCRIPTS

Shank and Abelson define *cognitive scripts* as related sequences of actions that characterize frequently experienced events and, in turn, guide expectations and behaviors in everyday situations. The recurring experience of a particular event creates an internalized "template" of the likely sequence of actions, participants, and props within that situation. A restaurant script, for example, contains a basic series of events that typically occur in a restaurant (ordering food, eating a meal, receiving a check, and paying a bill), a cast of regular characters (hostess, waitress, busboy, and patrons), and common props (menus, plates, glasses, tables, and chairs).

Cognitive scripts are useful mental mechanisms because of their cognitive efficiency. Initially, the acquisition of new scripts may require conscious and effortful cognitive processing and resources.

However, once learned, cognitive scripts become part of long-term memory and can be applied to everyday situations with mental ease. As a result, people do not have to encounter each event as a new situation requiring a great deal of mental effort. Instead, cues within the environment activate a previously acquired script automatically and effortlessly. Furthermore, cognitive scripts can be generalized to a degree, allowing for flexibility within a range of similar events. For example, a restaurant script for an Italian restaurant can be applied to a Mexican restaurant because both environments encompass similar courses of events.

MEDIA AS TEACHER

In using Huesmann's information processing model to examine the effects of television content, researchers havesame time. Not surprisingly, research conducted on college students suggests a positive relationship between game playing and visual attentional skills. In a recent study of college students, video game players (who had played action video games at least 4 focused particularly on how violent content can influence children's behavior. Huesmann's model draws from Shank and Abelson's work on cognitive script theory and from Albert Bandura's observational learning theory to elucidate the processes involved in of media-based scripts over time that direct their behaviors, expectations, and outcomes in real-life situations.

THE ACQUISITION OF NEW SCRIPTS

Children do not necessarily learn from everything that they watch on television. Huesmann believes that new information is retained only if it is integrated through an encoding process by which the information is mentally represented and then stored in long-term memory. To encode a new script, a child must first attend to the presented sequence of actions. Attention to televised scripts depends on a program's saliency, distinctness, and relevance to the child, including the child's identification with the character and the perceived realism of the program. The encoding process then requires a child to rehearse the script by ruminating or acting it out in order to commit the script to long-term memory. The more a child rehearses a particular script, the more accessible it becomes to the child, and the more likely the child is to apply the script to future situations.

Activation, Retrieval, and Application of Scripts

Once a script is learned, its activation, retrieval, and application occur automatically and effortlessly. According to Huesmann's information processing model, there are five steps by which this recall process occurs: (1) A child must be confronted with a specific situation; (2) the child must evaluate the most salient cues in the environment to activate potential scripts that match the situation; (3) the child then retrieves a variety of scripts and evaluates their effectiveness to navigate the situation at hand; (4) the most suitable script is selected; and (5) the script is applied to guide behavior.

Huesmann's script-based theory illuminates the process by which children acquire aggressive behaviors from television violence. Research shows that, the more children watch violent content, the more likely they are to home in on the violent acts portrayed on television, activate violent scripts, and act out aggressively after viewing.

COGNITIVE SCRIPTS, TELEVISION VIOLENCE, AND CHILDREN

There is strong evidence that media teach children new behaviors, especially aggressive behaviors. An overwhelming number of studies have shown that exposure to television violence promotes short-term and long-term aggression among audiences. Preschool-age children seem to be particularly vulnerable to television violence because violent content is often highlighted by the qualities that attract young children's attention, such as fast pacing, loud sounds, and music. Since preschoolers have difficulty understanding subtle qualities of content, such as character motivation, narrative inference, and consequences of behaviors, they may not understand the complexities involved in a character's behavior or its consequences. Instead, children may attend only to the rewards received by aggressive acts. Therefore, repeated exposure to violent content can lead to children to develop maladaptive scripts in which aggressive behavior is deemed an acceptable way to navigate situations. These maladaptive scripts, committed to long-term memory in childhood, can continue to produce patterns of aggressive behavior throughout adulthood.

—Katherine Hanson

See also Aggression, Movies and; Aggression, Television and; Schema Theory; Schemas/Scripts, Aggressive; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory

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COGNITIVE SKILLS, COMPUTER USE AND

Does computer use affect cognitive skills? The reasoning behind this question is that use of a tool such as the computer requires specific cognitive skills, so repeated use of the tool may have an effect on those skills. Research addressing this question has mostly focused on the informal uses of the computer within the home, such as computer and video games. Although these studies have focused simply on cognitive skills, two lines of research are evident. One line of research has focused on generalized cognitive skills and school readiness and typically has used standardized tests. The other line of research has focused on specific skills, such as eye-hand coordination, divided visual attention, spatial skills, and iconic representation; these skills are crucial to most computer applications, such as video and computer games as well as the Internet.

COMPUTER USE AND GENERALIZED COGNITIVE SKILLS

Although the findings from the first line of research are limited and somewhat contradictory, they seem to indicate that computer use enhances skills such as alphabet recognition, counting and premathematical knowledge, concept learning, and language scores. For instance, one study found that, although computer exposure during the preschool years was related to the development of preschool concepts, the frequency of such use and household ownership of electronic and video games was not. Other studies suggest that home computer use may be positively linked to academic performance—for instance, well-controlled studies have shown advances in reading and mathematics, computer knowledge, following directions, grammar, and school achievement tests. Although these latter studies involved after-school computer use, the informal nature of the after-school context mimics the informal use of computers within the home.

COMPUTER USE AND SPECIFIC COGNITIVE SKILLS

The second line of research has focused mostly on popular action games played either on the computer or on specialized game systems such as Nintendo. These games contain rapid movement, extensive visual imagery, and intense interaction, plus various activities occurring simultaneously at different locations on the screen. Studies indicate that children who play such games can improve specific cognitive skills, such as eye-hand coordination, visual attention, spatial skills (e.g., three-dimensional representation of space and judgment of speeds and distances), and iconic representational skills.

One important skill utilized by most action games is eye-hand coordination, which is the rapid translation of visual information into motor actions by the hand. It is also a skill critical for many occupations, such as dentistry, surgery, and machine operation, and for athletic activities of all kinds. Research suggests that action games do have a positive effect on eye-hand coordination as measured in tests involving moving targets.

Another skill required for playing computer and video games is divided visual attention, which is skill at keeping track of multiple things happening simultaneously—not unlike a pilot's keeping track of a row of several engine dials simultaneously. Most action games frequently have more than one entity present and acting on the screen at the same time. Not surprisingly, research conducted on college students suggests a positive relationship between game playing and visual attentional skills. In a recent study of college

students, video game players (who had played action video games at least 4 days per week for a minimum of 1 hour per day for the previous 6 months) had enhanced attentional capacity compared to non–video game players (who had had little or no video game usage in the previous 6 months). Attentional capacity was measured on the computer in this study as well. In a follow-up study, subjects who received training on an action video game (*Medal of Honor*) for 10 consecutive days showed greater improvement in attentional strategies than those who played a puzzle game (*Tetris*). In contrast to the action video game, which was a battle game in which multiple entities were simultaneously engaged in various actions, *Tetris* was a dynamic puzzle game in which only one event took place at a time.

It is important to note that strategies for dividing visual attention have become necessary both for viewing television and for using computers. In the case of television, it is commonplace to have divided screens, with textual information running across the bottom simultaneously with the main program on the screen. In computer use, youth often move from window to window, simultaneously monitoring their instant messages, email, and homework while at the same time downloading music videos and watching television.

Spatial skills are a suite of skills that include skills such as mental rotation, spatial visualization, and the ability to deal with two-dimensional images in a hypothetical two- or three-dimensional space. Spatial skills are required by many, if not all, action video games, and research suggests that action games do help to improve spatial skills. For instance, video game playing has been found to enhance the spatial ability to mentally rotate three-dimensional objects in fifth-, seventh-, and ninth-grade students. In another study, on $10^{1/2}$ to $11^{1/2}$-year-olds, practice on a computer game (*Marble Madness*) reliably improved spatial performance (e.g., anticipating targets, extrapolating spatial paths), compared to practice on a computerized word game called *Conjecture*. *Marble Madness* required players to guide a marble along a three-dimensional grid using a joystick; the player had to keep the marble on the path and prevent it from falling off or being attacked by intruders. Another important skill required by action games is creating two-dimensional representations of space. Typically, the action takes place in a virtual space, and players must form a mental representation of the whole space and understand how each screen relates spatially to other parts of the space shown on different screens. Although there has been no research examining this skill, it is likely that computer use enhances it as well.

A final skill examined in the research is iconic representation, which is the ability to create and read images, such as pictures and diagrams. Iconic images are embodied in most computer applications and are frequently more important than words in many action games. Research with college students has found that that playing a computer game helped shifted representational styles from verbal to iconic. Game playing not only made participants create more iconic representations, it also seemed to make them understand iconic representation better.

It is important to note that the findings of extant research on the question of computer use and cognitive skills suggests only that computer game playing may enhance a particular skill if the game utilizes that skill and if the child's initial skill level has matured to a certain level. Furthermore, research has examined only the immediate consequences of computer use and has not systematically examined the long-term effects of computer use on cognitive skills. Finally, the research has not examined the effects of newer computer applications such as the Internet on specific cognitive skills.

—Kaveri Subrahmanyam and Patricia Greenfield

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Developmental Differences, Media and; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and

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COMIC BOOKS, JAPANESE

See Anime; Manga

COMIC BOOKS, SUPERHEROES IN

The superhero is a 20th-century American construction. Although it has ancient roots, the first superhero figure was Superman, who has remained a popular figure since his appearance in 1938 and has been marketed at various times to children, adolescents, and adults. Although superheroes continue to fascinate Americans, they also remain important commodities, constantly reinvented to meet shifting cultural attitudes.

EARLY SUPERHEROES

Although traces of modern-day superheroes such as Superman, Batman, Spiderman, and Wonder Woman can be found in ancient Greek and Roman myths, 18th-century gothic romance novels, late 19th- and early 20th-century science fiction, pulp and dime-store Westerns, and detective stories, the superhero figure itself did not emerge until 1938, when DC Comics featured Superman on the cover of Action Comics #1. The immediate success of this title quickly overtook the nascent comic-book industry, and the superhero became a mainstay.

Because superheroes first appeared in comic books, it has been assumed that these figures primarily appealed to young children. This assumption has also led to explanations of their appeal in terms of fantasies of adulthood bestowed upon their young readers. One of the most popular superheroes of the 1940s was Captain Marvel, whose secret identity was cub reporter Billy Batson. By saying the word *shazam*, Billy could become the all-powerful, adult Captain Marvel. Another related explanation has suggested that superheroes fulfill the family romance fantasy for children, providing self-reassuring answers to questions of where they came from and why they are different from their parents. This reinterpretation of Freud has worked particularly well when applied to Superman, an alien from another planet who is adopted by the Kents and therefore not doomed to suffer their frailties. In other words, superheroes constitute ego ideals for young children. Peter Middleton has argued that superheroes actually provide a road map of sorts for children seeking to learn about the adult world and that, for their adult creators, they serve as fantasies that are purposely all-powerful because they compensate for the failures of adult manhood to live up to its promise.

Although superheroes such as Superman may be attractive as sources of narcissistic identification, they also problematize this identification by marking their hero as explicitly "other." Superman, particularly in his latter-day incarnation, is often situated as an outsider and an illegal alien—what is more, one who feels guilty having wrought danger and destruction by his arrival on Earth (on *Smallville,* he blames all the kryptonite-related disasters on his arrival). It is often their guilty consciences that motivate superheroes to take action. Also, although victory is all but assured, it is never complete; there will always be a new challenge or a new villain, marking their control as partial at best. Superman could easily take over the world but purposely chooses to remain a loyal American citizen. Thus, narcissistic identification with such a figure may involve fantasies of self-control and, more accurately, self-denial more than fantasies of power, omnipotence, mastery, and control.

Beyond such criticisms of the family romance myth, claims that superheroes appeal only to children are ahistorical and inaccurate. There is much evidence to support the claim that comic books were never truly intended to be consumed only by younger readers. A large market for Superman during World War II were soldiers overseas. One in every four magazines shipped to soldiers was a comic book, including 35,000 copies of Superman each month. Although the comic-book industry clearly courted the juvenile market, business watchers in the postwar years also recognized comic books' appeal to young adults and the role of the war in creating a "captive market" of soldiers. The Market Research Company of America reported that, in 1945, 95% of boys and 91% of girls aged 6–11 read comic books, but so did 87% of boys and 81% of girls aged 12–17 and 41%

of men and 28% of women aged 18–30, suggesting that the market appeal crossed both gender and generational lines.

SUPERHEROES IN THE POST–WORLD WAR II ERA

Yet, even as comic-book sales continued to increase through the 1950s, superhero popularity began to dramatically decrease in the postwar years. While Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman persisted, DC cancelled almost all of its other superhero titles. The decline in superhero popularity has been attributed to a flooding of the market in the immediate postwar years with derivatives by new publishers seeking to capitalize on the industry's success, as well as a growing conservatism within the publishing houses, which curbed innovation. Superhero decline also spoke to a shifting public mood in the postwar years, to which costumed heroes could no longer speak. Historian Bradford Wright suggests that the Allied victory in World War II seemed to create a world in which the goals of superheroes had been achieved, and that the public interest in such heroic figures consequently declined. Superhero comic books were replaced by a variety of new genres aimed at a differentiated and diverse potential audience; such genres included true crime, romance, horror, war, and lighthearted teen humor.

There can be little doubt that the industry's genre diversification and embrace of more adult-themed comics in the late 1940s was motivated, in part, by its desire to cater to these different groups as well as its recognition that its younger audience base was getting older and needed to be maintained. Yet, external threats of censorship and struggles to define its audience have also characterized and impacted the development of the U.S. comic-book industry. As early as 1940, critics such as Sterling North were calling comic books a "national disgrace" and accusing them of exploiting children's newfound consumer power (many preteens and teenagers saw an increase in the size of their wallets during the Depression and war years, as the collapse of the economy and enlistments in the armed services meant that more of America's youth entered the job market). North's arguments point to the assumed juvenile audience to which comic books catered. The early connections made by critics between comic books and the threats they posed to American youth would dog the industry and shape its direction in the years to come.

In the postwar years, public concerns shifted toward juvenile delinquency, and the comic-book industry, along with motion pictures and broadcasting, fell under scrutiny. Militant opponents of comic books, such as Gershon Legman and Dr. Frederick Wertham, emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s and held great sway in public debates and congressional hearings. Wertham's 1954 *Seduction of the Innocent* was a best-selling attack on comic books. In 1948, more than 50 U.S. cities enacted legislation to ban comic-book sales to minors (once again hinting at the adult audience comic-book publishers were actually targeting alongside youth).

REGULATION OF COMIC-BOOK CONTENT

It was not until 1954, however, when the U.S. Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency turned their attention to the comic-book industry, that a permanent self-regulatory body—the Comics Magazine Association of America (CMAA)—was established. The CMAA code was extremely restrictive. Wright has argued that the comics' code was introduced into the industry at a moment when other media were just beginning to recognize the youth market's potential and that it greatly hampered the comic-book industry's ability to compete. The CMAA responded to public concerns over the threat comic books posed to children and, in the process, contributed to the medium's juvenilization of its subject matter. As part of their efforts to avoid legal censoring, comic-book publishers reinstated their superhero titles, this time with a clear child market in mind. The successful licensing of Superman products, as well as sponsorship by the Kellogg Company of the Superman radio series and *The Adventures of Superman* TV series, also played an important role in refocusing the character toward children, as this was the breakfast-food company's (not the comic-book industry's) target market.

The CMAA's efforts to childproof the medium were relatively short-lived, as Marvel Comics established its popularity in the early 1960s by directly targeting teenagers and college students. Marvel superheroes such as Spiderman and the X-Men were teenagers themselves and suffered from various adolescent anxieties about self-image, self-confidence, and romantic failures. Meanwhile, Marvel's publicity machine exploited the company's anti-establishment reputation to make its product appealing to 1960s college students beginning to take part in civil rights and counterculture

protests. Others have pointed to the appeal of comic books and superheroes to the emergent pop art movement of the 1960s and its potential for exploitation by culture industries. This further suggests that the child-like appeal of comic-book heroes in the 1950s and 1960s did not easily equate with their marketability solely to children. By the 1980s, comic-book specialty shops had become the primary distribution outlets for comic books; independent publishers dealt in more controversial subject matter; and the collector's market transformed comic-book acquisition into big business for investors. The medium's adult market became the industry's primary target once more; historically, this market had never truly disappeared, although efforts to exploit it had been greatly constrained.

CURRENT TRENDS

With the increasing trend toward conglomeration of media industries since the 1970s, superheroes have seen a revival in various mediated forms, including motion-picture franchises (Batman, Superman, Spiderman), television series (*Smallville*), and cartoons (*Justice League, Teen Titans*), as well as new popularity for comic books (Marvel's Ultimates line has reinvented their classic heroes for a new generation of teenagers). Contemporary takes on superheroes either have either a cynical, darker side to their heroics or have nostalgically remembered them in simpler forms from eras gone by (or both; while *Smallville* plays up Clark Kent's adolescent angst and guilt, it is also set in a Rockwellian 1950s American town under constant threat from urban industrialists).

—Avi Santo

See also Cartoons, History of; Comics, Daily Newspaper; Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation

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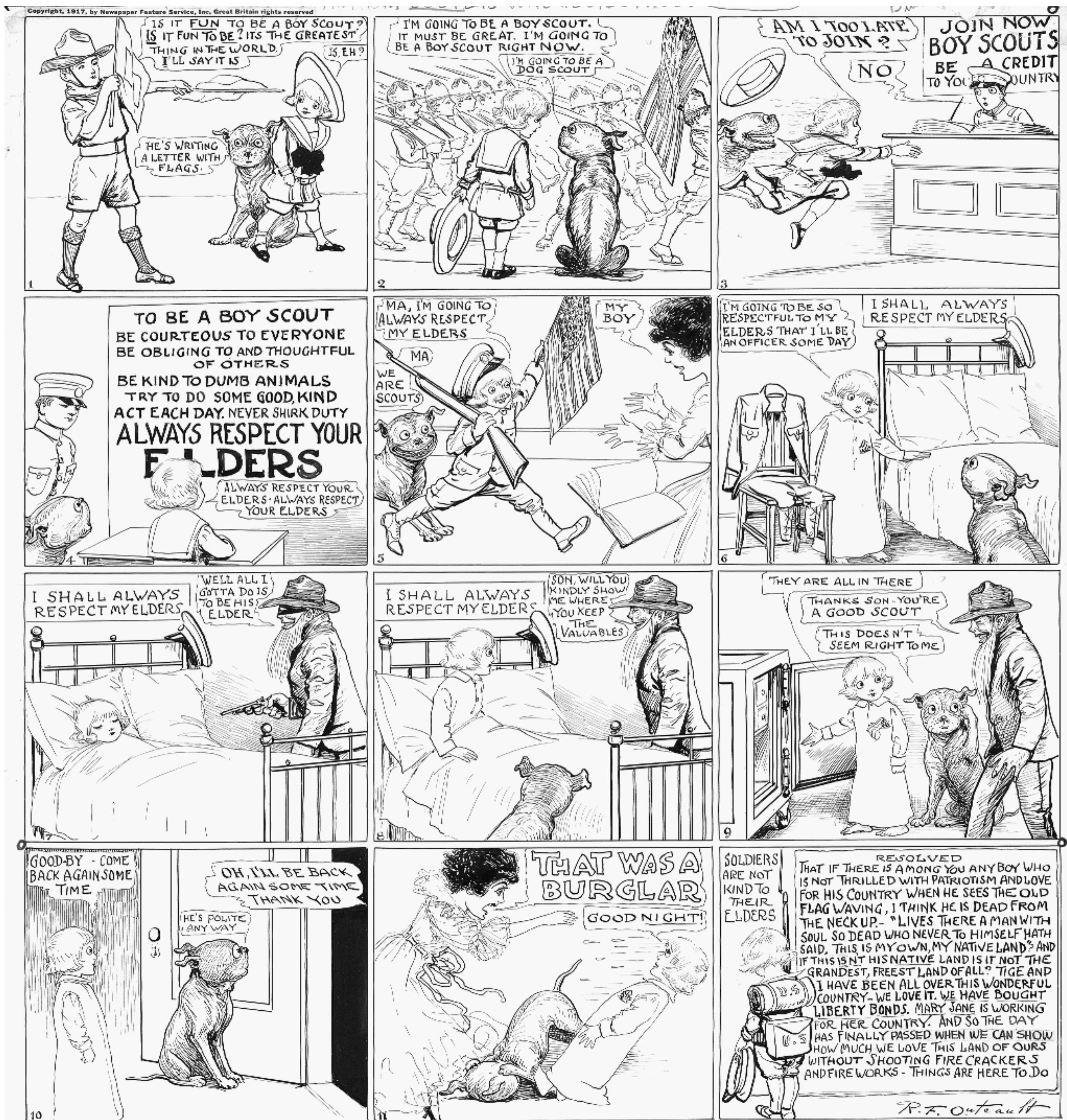
COMICS, DAILY NEWSPAPER

Children, teens, and youth cultures have been central preoccupations of comic strips and their critics since the development of the medium at the end of the 19th century. In the 20th century, there were debates as to whether the stories and images depicted—many of them featuring children—were an antidote or a symptom of a decline in cultural standards and moral values in the wake of a new era of mass culture. By the end of the 20th century, these concerns were replaced by a growing lament that the American comic strip had stagnated and no longer held the American public's attention the way it once had. As in the previous century, there are complaints that the comics have become more commodity than art form. Such arguments fail to take into account the subtle shifts that have been infused into comic strips, particularly those featuring children, over the past few decades, nor do they recognize the continued popularity of many comic strips in other media, sustained through increasingly synergistic cross-promotional and intertextual marketing strategies in an age of media conglomeration.

Predecessors of the comic strip date back as far as the 13th century. They include 17th- and 18th-century printed broadsheets featuring both religious and profane images and 19th-century humor magazines such as *Puck* (1876) and *Judge* (1887), which printed several political and social cartoons in each issue. However, the recognizable elements of the modern comic strip did not fully emerge until the 1890s and were fueled by the newspaper syndication wars fought by William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. Recognizable elements included recurring characters, dialogue balloons, and sequential art. Earlier comic illustrations typically were only one panel, with an accompanying script below or adjacent to the image,



This 12-frame comic strip shows Buster Brown and his dog Tige inspired by the sight of a group of Boy Scouts drilling with rifles and flags. Buster and Tige sign up with a recruiter, who gives Buster a list of rules—in particular, the command, "Always respect your elders." That night, Buster is awakened by a man wearing a false beard and carrying a pistol, who tells Buster to show him where the valuables are kept. In line with his resolution to respect elders, Buster shows him the safe. Later, his horrified mother informs him that the man was a burglar. Buster reflects that, after all, "Soldiers are not kind to their elders." The strip concludes with a long "resolution" in which Buster resolves to do what he can to show his devotion to his country. Richard F. Outcault originated the Buster Brown strip in the *New York Herald* in 1902, but in 1905, he was lured away by William Randolph Hearst and moved the strip to the *New York American.* The Boy Scouts in this sequence are probably members of one of the rival, more militaristic groups of Boy Scouts that flourished briefly in the second decade of the 20th century.

SOURCE: Courtesy of the LIbrary of Congress.

and rarely featured the same cast of characters from one issue to the next.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, new communication and transportation technologies, cheaper printing techniques, and a growing, increasingly literate urban population contributed to the emergence of inexpensive daily newspapers such as Hearst's *New York Journal* (1895) and Pulitzer's *New York World* (1883). These newspapers catered to a middle- and lower-class readership, delivering daily dosages of murder, lurid scandal, and comic strips. Comic strips featuring recurring characters were seen as a viable strategy for getting return readers and establishing a form of brand identification with particular newspapers through the personalities of the comic strip characters. Mass immigration and an uneven literacy level among readers made the "funnies" even more marketable, drawing in constituencies that might otherwise spend their increased leisure time and disposable income elsewhere. As the Hearst and Pulitzer newspaper empires grew beyond New York, they began to syndicate local strips across the nation, selling them to their own newspapers as well as to papers in cities in which they did not yet have a foothold. In this manner, many early comic-strip characters achieved national iconic status.

Among the most popular early comic-strip characters were the Yellow Kid (1895) and Buster Brown (1902). Both were created by Richard Outcault. Also popular were Rudolph Dirks's Katzenjammer Kids (1897). Although Outcault's and Dirks's strips featured the adventures and high jinks of precocious children, Ian Gordon and others have argued that these characters appealed more to adult readers than they did to children (although they were read by many children as well). Gordon asserts that the appeal of many early comic strips lay in their ability to negotiate tensions resulting from the onset of mass culture, even as the strips themselves were products that profited from that same milieu. In this manner, comic strips drew upon ambivalences in "modernist sensibilities" by using the bad behavior and "innocent" insights of their child characters to poke fun at consumer culture and to allow adult readers to vicariously rebel against its constraints through their refusal to conform to the rules. At the same time, their appeal led to increased newspaper sales and their replication (sometimes legally licensed, often not) in a wide array of consumer products.

In particular, Buster Brown's appeal drew upon the dichotomy between his physical appearance and style of dress, reminiscent of Victorian-era representations of childhood innocence, and his repeated transgressions and pranks at the expense of his parents and other adults. Although Buster was often punished for his actions at the end of each strip, temporarily restoring order, readers were assured that this would not stop him from breaking the rules again the next day.

In part, Buster Brown's comeuppance at the close of many strips was a response to an increasing concern that the bad behavior in comic strips was further evidence of the decay in moral values brought about by the very processes of mass culture and consumerism that strips sought to exploit and unravel. Although adults enjoyed the transgressions found in these strips, they often deflected their ambivalence toward mass culture by expressing concern that these same comics aroused too much excitement in children, encouraged bad behavior, and were a poor substitute for more wholesome forms of entertainment.

William Donahey, creator of a child-friendly, single-panel comic called *The Teenie Weenies* (1917), attempted (with mixed success) to exploit the wholesomeness of his creations through his marketing and licensing efforts while also justifying their commodity status by emphasizing their ability to teach children good moral values. Buster Brown became the first brand-name character in U.S. history and was heavily licensed by Outcault across a wide range of products, including shoes, candies, toys, clothing, plays, films, and many other forms of ephemera. Unlike Donahey, Outcault purposely marketed the contradictory innocence and mischievousness of his creation.

In the 1930s, a new type of strip began to replace the gag-focused, episodic comic. This was the continuity strip, whose most popular subgenre, the serialized adventure strip, ended each day with a cliffhanger that left its hero in mortal peril. Although these strips were met with even greater concern by those bemoaning the negative effects of consumer culture on children, the adventure serial is considered by many comic strip historians to be the pinnacle of the medium's artistic and narrative potential, imaginatively combining the fantastic and the authentic, the cartoonish and the realistic in their imagery and plots. While some adventure serials, such as *Wash Tubbs* (Roy Crane, 1924) and *Terry and the Pirates* (Milton Caniff, 1934) featured teenage adventurers, most had adult heroes (*Flash Gordon* [Alex Raymond, 1934], *Dick Tracy* [Chester Gould, 1931], *Prince Valiant* [Harold Foster, 1937]) who served as wish-fulfillment fantasies for adult and child

readers alike, depicting exhilarating, if impossible, worlds filled with treasure hunting and crime fighting that countered the monotonous and often-unrewarding demands and expectations of a Fordist labor economy.

Many of these strips reached the height of their popularity during World War II, sending their heroes off to fight Axis enemies while promoting patriotism, encouraging enlistment, and selling war bonds in the strips and in other forms of public service publicity coordinated through the Office of War Information. In 1943, a speech given to teenage enlistee Terry before he heads out to fight the Japanese enemy appeared in a Sunday strip of *Terry and the Pirates* and was dubbed "The Pilot's Creed." It was read into the Congressional Record and distributed to military personnel for years to come.

World War II also contributed to the demise of the adventure serial, as paper shortages reduced the amount of space newspapers could devote to comic strips. Rather than cancel the strips, most papers reduced them in size, cutting five columns down to four, full-page strips down to half-pages, and cropping the bottom of each strip by as much as 25% to cram more in. These changes were not conducive to the style of art most adventure serials employed. By 1950, the gag strip once again became the most prominent form of comic strip and has remained so to this day.

The 1950s also saw the debut of three comic strips that would greatly influence American popular culture and the cartooning industry for decades to come: Charles Schultz's *Peanuts* (1950), Hank Ketchum's *Dennis the Menace* (1951), and Mort Walker's *Beetle Bailey* (1950). All three drew upon aspects of children and youth culture to comment on the era's suburban idealism and conformist pressures, albeit from somewhat different stances.

Peanuts has been described by Robert Harvey as a strip about "introspective li'l folks" (Harvey, 1998). It relied for its humor on the decidedly adultlike sensibilities and concerns of its child characters, establishing the uses of non-sequitur humor as the norm for comic strips to this day (particularly those featuring children and animals). Through this dichotomy, Schultz was able to poke gentle fun at emerging fads like pop psychology (Lucy's infamous booth that offered therapy for the price of a nickel led Charlie Brown astray on most occasions) and pseudointellectualism (often exposed through Snoopy's aspirations to become the first canine novelist).

Dennis the Menace was launched by Ketchum against advice that strips featuring children were outdated. The strip was an instant success. In many ways, Dennis was a throwback to the mischievous child strips like *The Yellow Kid, The Katzenjammer Kids,* and *Buster Brown*. Unlike the Victorian values Buster repeatedly failed to live up to or the lower-class immigrant narratives played out in the Yellow Kid and the Katzenjammer adventures, however, Dennis the Menace was positioned from the onset as an all-American, middle-class kid whose pranks and troublemaking rarely pointed to contradictions or anxieties bubbling underneath the surface of suburbia but instead often reinforced the wholesomeness of white middle-class mores, transforming pranks from dissent to innocent play.

Beetle Bailey was the most political of the three strips, originally portraying Beetle as a lazy, anti-authoritarian college student, and then, once the Korean War broke out, enlisting him in the army, where his own efforts to shirk responsibility were equaled only by the incompetence of the military machine.

These strips, as well as those that followed them, were also highly merchandised through a long line of licensed products bearing their images, marketed to children and adults alike. In addition, their characters were licensed as spokespersons for various marketing campaigns. Efforts to maintain the childlike innocence of their "stars" while simultaneously profiting from these same attributes were often at the forefront of concerns on how best to sell comic-strip characters. Epitomizing such tensions is a January 31, 1968, letter from Ketchum to Sandy McGowan of the Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample advertising agency regarding commercial spots for A&W Restaurants that featured Dennis as the spokesman. Ketchum wrote that Dennis was not a "a little pitchman. He's merely the dirty-faced kid next door who couldn't care less about saving nickels or even where he gets his next root beer."

Comic strips depicting children have also come under attack for their political satire. Although the exploration of political concerns in comic strips is often associated with the contemporary moment and strips such as *Doonesbury* (Garry Trudeau, 1970), *Bloom County* (Berke Breathed, 1980), and *The Boondocks* (Aaron McGruder, 1998), in fact they have been a staple of the medium (and the controversy surrounding it) since the 1920s, when Harold Gray's *Little Orphan Annie* was born (1924). Gray is considered an arch-conservative, and his strip overtly pitted Annie's self-reliance and the self-made fortune of her rich benefactor, Daddy Warbucks, against Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal politics. The strip generated a

great deal of furor among readers, many of whom would regularly write letters to the editor arguing that editorials belonged on the editorial page and that the strip contained political propaganda that was harmful to young readers.

Many cartoonists have followed Gray's lead in using children to voice political concerns. In particular, McGruder's *The Boondocks* has provided a voice for African American political concerns through the often-angry, savvy 10-year-old Huey and his gangsta-wannabe 8-year-old brother Riley. McGruder has used the strip to openly attack Republicans, the war in Iraq, and the commodification of African American culture by celebrities such as Mariah Carey and Puffy. In one well-known strip, Huey proclaims, "Jesus Christ was black, Ronald Reagan was the devil, and the government lied about 9/11." Although coming from the opposite side of the political spectrum from Annie, McGruder's strip has faced equally harsh criticism for its use of children as so-called propagandists and on occasion has been pulled from various newspapers because of its content. Much like Annie, Dennis the Menace, and Buster Brown, the Boondocks characters have also successfully been merchandised, with a new series launched in 2005 on the Cartoon Network.

—Avi Santo

See also Anime; Cartoons, Educational; Cartoons, Gender Representation in; Cartoons, History of; Comic Books, Superheroes in; Comic Strips, Gender Stereotypes in; Manga (Japanese Comic Books)

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COMIC STRIPS, GENDER STEREOTYPES IN

It has been argued that comic strips represent a shorthand version of reality and most reflect the collective American subconscious. This art form is faithfully read by hundreds of millions of readers each week, regardless of age, sex, class, or race. Thus, it is not surprising that researchers have repeatedly turned to comic strips in an attempt to discern trends in culture. This research by and large has concluded that comic strips generally perpetuate, rather than challenge, gender stereotypes. The media play an important role in the formation of gender identity among children and adolescents, so their exposure to gender stereotypes is of significance in understanding identity development.

Beginning in 1974, research on gender representation in comic strips indicated that traditional sex-role stereotypes predominated in the comics. Ten years later, a replication of the earlier study demonstrated that females continued to appear less frequently and to remain in the home more often than males. They also were likely to be portrayed in stereotypical roles, engaging in child-care and home-centered activities. A similar study published at about that same time concurred; men were represented far out of proportion to their true ratio, and women were represented far less than their true proportion of the population. In comic strips, female characters were much less likely to work outside the home than women in real life. Men were rarely shown involved in child care or the home. This builds on research that indicates that single men are presented as autonomous and in control of their lives, but married men become meek and defenseless against their wives.

Other research conducted in the mid-1980s uncovered the "double burden" of the working woman in comics. This line of research compared traditional and modern comic households, finding that, although the appearance of husbands exceeded that of wives in traditional comics, the opposite was true in modern comics. Husbands and wives in modern comics were more equally represented in indoor settings versus outdoor ones, whereas traditional comics showed

men outside and women inside. Surprisingly, modern working women spent more time on household tasks and child care than did traditional wives. None of the cartoons showed a husband cleaning, doing dishes, preparing meals, or doing laundry. Men did, however, do yard work and home maintenance. Working women were portrayed negatively, spending less time with their spouses, being “hard,” controlling, critical, and castrating toward males, and experiencing much stress. The working woman was in other ways portrayed as superwoman, doing it all. Regardless of whether the woman works, she is primarily responsible for household tasks and childcare and can expect little help from the husband. The home lives of families without working moms are portrayed as happier; when the mom works, home life is disrupted.

Another line of research has focused more particularly on the representation of fatherhood in comic strips. This work has emphasized the degree to which fathers, as compared with mothers, have been portrayed as incompetent, nurturant, or supportive, and the degree to which mothers, as compared with fathers, are mocked or made fun of in comic strips. Such inquiry is based on the assumption that the level of incompetence portrayed can be used as a barometer of social trends. Early research in this area examined *Saturday Evening Post* cartoons published between 1922 and 1978, finding that fathers were likely to be portrayed as incompetent until the 1970s, when portrayals improved. Building on this study, follow-up research broke down various eras more specifically. This study found that fathers were depicted as less competent during the 1920s, but the disparity between males and females in terms of incompetence decreased in the 1930s and even more in the early 1940s. Looking at comic strips on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, research indicated that an improved image of fatherhood appeared in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s but not at the expense of the presentation of women. This study also found that fathers in the 1960s were more likely than in the past to be portrayed as supportive and nurturant but also were more likely to be mocked. Discrepancies between males and females in terms of warmth decreased from the 1950s to the 1960s not because men became more nurturant but because women became less so.

Analysis has also focused on comparison of the treatment of male and female adults and children, especially in single-income homes versus dual-income homes. Fathers and sons are pictured more frequently in traditional single-income families, and mothers and daughters are shown more in dual-income, modern cartoons. Sons in single-income homes and daughters in dual-income homes were more likely to be pictured outside the home than their opposite-sex counterparts. The comics show that maternal employment has a greater impact on sons than on daughters, although both male and female children are more likely to share in household responsibilities and show disciplinary problems if the mom works outside the home. The cartoons generally show stereotypical images of male and female children. Regardless of whether the mothers work, they tend to interact with the children more, and more positively than the fathers, who are more disciplinary and threatening. Sons are disciplined more frequently than daughters. When fathers interact with a child, it is more likely to be with a son than a daughter.

In the most recent study of gender in the comics, stereotypes were labeled a “time-honored tradition.” In 2004, women were still underrepresented, more likely to be married and to have children, and less likely to have jobs. Females did domestic work, and males did yard work. Females were more aggressive verbally. Minorities were almost nonexistent.

—Teresa L. Thompson
and Ronda M. Scantlin

See also Comics, Daily Newspaper; Cartoons, Gender Representation in; Cartoons, History of

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COMMERCIAL TELEVISION AND RADIO IN SCHOOLS

Commercial television and commercial radio came into schools notably later than advertising and marketing

into media in general. Whereas the marketing trend began in the early 1920s, commercial television did not enter schools until 1979. In that year, Los Angeles-based Channel One first operated in public school classrooms. Commercial radio made its entry into schools in 1992 with Minneapolis-based Star Broadcasting. Although very little impact research exists regarding the effect of Channel One and Star Broadcasting upon children's consumer attitudes and behavior, early research conducted on Channel One points to a significant product-advertising impact in schools.

CHANNEL ONE

Since 1979, Channel One has operated in schools under a contractual agreement with a participating school whereby the school agrees to show the Channel One news program (10 minutes of news and 2 minutes of commercials) on 90% of all school days in 80% of all classrooms. In return, the school receives a satellite dish installed by Channel One, two central videocassette recorders, internal wiring for transmission throughout the school, and a 19-inch television set for each classroom. The daily news program feed is beamed from Los Angeles to the school's satellite dish between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. Other program and channel offerings also are beamed to the school for review and classroom use at the discretion of individual classroom teachers. The "golden goose" is the daily news program and its paid commercials for products ranging from candy, pretzels, gum, and soft drinks, to snack foods, fashion apparel, and athletic shoes. Viewing the daily news program is contractually mandated. Because Channel One has the unique capacity to reach all of the given child and adolescent target market in one setting, Channel One is able to charge premium rates for its ad space, and advertisers, who are readily aware of the unique setting and opportunity, are quite willing to pay. All equipment is owned, operated, and maintained by Channel One.

STAR BROADCASTING

Star Broadcasting markets to both public schools and military installations. In its radio operations in schools, Star Broadcasting follows a contractual arrangement similar to Channel One's and provides a satellite dish, wiring, and speakers. Star Broadcasting then beams Top 50 "hot rock" or "hot country" music and ads into the school's hallways, lobbies, and lunchrooms. The experience is comparable to listening to any mainstream commercial rock or country music radio station. For carrying the service, Star Broadcasting pays cash to the schools—a payment roughly equal to the revenue Star receives for carrying one single ad on one single day.

CONTRACTUAL PREVALENCE IN SCHOOLS

Figures on prevalence are proprietary and difficult to obtain. Both Channel One and Star Broadcasting target middle and high schools. By the company's own statements, Channel One has a contractual presence in roughly 38% of all U.S. middle and high schools and expects to add 1,000 schools per year over the next several years. Star Broadcasting reports presence in 400 schools nationwide.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON PRACTICE AND PREVALENCE

Three basic forces drive commercialism in schools. First, because tax dollars have not kept pace with school expenses, and because the general public resists tax increases, school systems are hungry for dollars. Second, corporations such as Channel One and Star Broadcasting recognize the uniqueness of this venue for product placement targeting their markets, and they readily pay cash and provide equipment in exchange for the opportunity to do so. For their corporate clients, it is much more cost-effective than trying to reach smaller fractions or segments of their target group in non-school-based venues. Third, students are entry-level consumers. The brand preferences and consumer patterns they form now are likely to be brand and company loyalty patterns that will continue throughout their consumer lives. Taken together, these driving forces provide a financial opportunity for schools and their corporate partners alike.

The broader potential costs of these practices are weighed most heavily by portions of the public and by consumer groups, who have raised the basic question of what education should and should not be. Critics of these advertising practices claim that the classroom and its hallways, lunchrooms, and lobbies should be advertising- and marketing-free zones. Those who take this position believe that parents deserve the assurance that school is a setting in which education is the only goal and that children and teens will not be courted by advertisers and targeted by marketing.

Critics also feel that the school and classroom settings compound the impact of marketing practices by tacitly implying that these ads and products have the endorsement of the school and its teachers. Because these criticisms concern children's health and vulnerability, these voices draw broadly from the medical community, educators, consumer groups, parents, and even students themselves.

IMPACT RESEARCH

Very little impact research exists regarding the effect of Channel One and Star Broadcasting upon children's consumer attitudes and behavior, and the scant research that does exist focuses solely on Channel One. In 1993, Bradley Greenberg and Jeffrey E. Brand examined the impact of Channel One on 10th-grade viewers. When students from two high schools receiving Channel One were compared with a matched group of students from two high schools not receiving it (the control group), the impact of Channel One's advertising surfaced in several ways. First, compared to the non–Channel One students, the viewing students expressed significantly more favorable attitudes toward the five most heavily advertised products. Second, when asked to name the brand they would purchase in each of eight product categories, the Channel One students named significantly more program-advertised brands than did the nonviewing students. Third, the Channel One students scored significantly higher than nonviewing students on a scale measuring materialistic attitudes (e.g., statements such as "Most people who have a lot of money are happier than most people who have only a little money."). There is much more to be investigated, but these results clearly suggest that commercial broadcasting in schools does have an impact on children and adolescents.

—Edward L. Palmer

See also Food and Beverage Advertising in Schools; Schools, Advertising/Marketing in

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COMMERCIAL TELEVISION IN SCHOOLS: CHANNEL ONE

Traditionally, there have been links between business and education in the United States, and examples of this connection are well-documented. However, according to a General Accounting Office (GAO) report, commercial activities in American schools have been increasingly visible in recent years. One such commercial activity is commercial television. Historically, teachers have rarely used television in schools, but the appearance of Channel One in classrooms in 1989 signaled a departure from this precedent. Despite controversies, Channel One programming is now shown in schools across the country. According to Channel One, 8 million students in 12,000 middle and high schools in the United States now have access to its programs. However, the future of Channel One, and commercial television in schools in general, is uncertain. The debate surrounding this issue will no doubt continue.

Channel One was launched as a pilot venture in March 1989 by magazine entrepreneur Chris Whittle. In return for showing a 12-minute current events program, which included 2 minutes of commercials, to students in their classrooms, each participating schools received a satellite dish so that the show could be received, a control console, and televisions for classrooms. The program was tested in six schools and deemed a success by Whittle. Channel One was then launched in March 1990 in 400 middle and high schools, and by the end of the 1990, 5,000 schools were signed on to participate. In 1994, Primedia, Inc. (then K-III) purchased Channel One from Whittle Communications.

However, Channel One has been criticized by many education groups, parents, school boards, and magazine and newspaper editorial writers. In fact, in June 1989, the New York Board of Regents banned Channel One from all New York public schools. The

board adopted another regulation in February 1990 prohibiting schools from entering into contracts that compelled children to view television advertisements, although Whittle lobbied heavily to allow Channel One in New York.

Channel One was also banned by the State Board of Education in North Carolina in 1990. When Whittle ignored the ban and signed a contract with the Thomasville, North Carolina, Board of Education, the state board sued. The case went to the North Carolina Supreme Court, which decided in Whittle's favor, ruling that the decision to show Channel One should be left to local school boards. The same argument was used by the Texas Board of Education in 1992 when it refused to ban the program.

In June 1990, Bill Honig, California's state superintendent of public instruction, launched an ad campaign protesting Channel One in order to push the legislature to ban Channel One and to discourage potential advertisers. Honig also promised to withhold state funds for the time that students spent watching commercials during the program. According to the *Wall Street Journal,* Whittle spent more than $1 million on lobbying in California by August 1993, and he was able to defeat three attempts to regulate Channel One in California. In September 1992, however, the California Superior Court ruled that Channel One could be shown in California schools, but it also held that teachers could decide not to show it, that school districts were required to provide alternative activities for students if their teachers decided not to show the program, and that parents had to be informed that their children did not have to watch the program.

More controversy came in 1994, when Karen Miller, a parent, requested a list from the Texas Education Association of all schools using Channel One. The agency refused, claiming that it had signed a nondisclosure agreement with Channel One when it had obtained the list. Channel One, however, decided not to enforce its agreement, and the list was given to Miller. It was found that Channel One had not paid the Texas business personal property tax, and in 1995 Channel One was required to pay $2 million in back taxes and penalties.

In May 1999, the topic of Channel One was discussed in a hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Senator Richard Shelby, an Alabama Republican, had long lobbied for the hearing. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader and conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly denounced Channel One.

DirecTV is another example of commercial television in schools. In May 2001, DirecTV announced that it would give free educational programming to up to 50,000 schools in a venture called the "school choice package." DirecTV would also provide 12,000 low-income schools with the necessary equipment to view the programming. Most of the channels included in the school choice program contain advertising.

In 1999, a Canadian firm, Athena Educational Partners, introduced the Youth News Network (YNN), a 12-1/2-minute program similar to Channel One's. YNN has sparked the same criticisms and opposition as Channel One.

—Leslie R. Williams

See also Commercial Television and Radio in Schools; Schools, Advertising/Marketing in

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COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC)

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) refers to human-human interaction via the computer. Some of the popular applications of CMC are email, instant messaging (IM), chat rooms, bulletin boards, and newsgroups. Compared to face-to-face (FtF) communication, CMC liberates communicators from the need to be physically co-present and thus from the consequent influence of nonverbal cues. Although some theorists and researchers argue that CMC-based relationships cannot be as rich as those formed in FtF encounters, others have identified ways in which CMC can actually increase intimacy among users. Research has offered growing evidence that CMC can enhance the lives of youth and adolescents in a variety of ways, including strengthening their communication skills, helping them to build interpersonal relationships, and helping them find information and peer support related to health issues.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

A central question about CMC is one of communicative richness: Is CMC as effective as FtF in fostering communication and building relationships between people? Scholars have debated the answer to this question since the early days of computing. Those espousing the *relationship-lost perspective* argue that CMC-based relationships are necessarily impersonal because of the absence of many features considered important by conventional theories of relationship development—nonverbal features (e.g., tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures) and potentially influential interpersonal features (e.g., physical attractiveness, skin color, gender). Meaning, usually aided by the use of nonverbal cues, is more likely to be misunderstood and unclear. According to uncertainty reduction theory, the diminished ability of CMC to reduce uncertainty stops, or at least slows down, the development of interpersonal relationships. The relative lack of social cues serves to exacerbate this difficulty in reducing uncertainty. Theories of relational development highlight the importance of physical appearance and physical attraction, especially in the development of romantic relationships. Yet such information is usually unavailable in CMC settings. According to social presence theory, social presence is a communicator's subjective sense of the salience of an interaction partner. It includes a set of cues that a medium offers: verbal, visual, and their subcategories. The fewer the cues, the less the degree of social presence one experiences when using that medium. Based on this theory, users feel less social presence through CMC. Social context cues theory also supports the relationship-lost view by showing that the decline in contextual, visual, and aural cues leads to decreased awareness and sensitivity, causing CMC to be more impersonal than FtF communication.

The *relationship-liberated perspective* poses a direct challenge to this position. Joseph Walther's social information processing theory, which represents one alternative to social presence theory, suggests that, because people need to manage uncertainty and develop relationships, they will adapt the textual cues to meet their needs when faced with a channel that does not carry visual and aural cues. Walther illustrates that, over time, email provides no fewer opportunities for positive personal relationships than FtF communication. It is not that CMC cannot convey relational messages; it simply needs more time to do so. Three factors that influence interpersonal relationships within CMC are presented in social information processing theory. First, people are naturally motivated to make friends with others (*relational motivators*). Second, over time CMC users develop the skills to decode textual cues to form interpersonal impressions. One example of this is the use of *emoticons*, such as ":-)" to indicate a smile. Through emoticons, some limitations of CMC may be overcome. Third, individuals who communicate through these technologies adapt strategies for attaining psychological-level knowledge within this new environment. For example, interrogation, self-disclosure, and deception detection are developed to function without contextual or nonverbal cues. Therefore, individuals are able to form impressions, gain interpersonal knowledge, and develop relationships solely through textual interaction. However, the dimension of time is critical to our understanding of relationship development through CMC. The domain of social presence is limited to short-term interactions only. When communication is expanded beyond the short term, CMC achieves normal interpersonal levels. At this point, the presence of social cues can even become an obstacle. Although the relationship-lost perspective of CMC might argue that anonymity

decreases attraction to group members because of the lack of interpersonal cues, a further study by Walther and his colleagues indicates that in new, unacquainted virtual teams, seeing one's partner promotes affection and social attraction, but in long-term online groups, the realistic images dampen the affinity.

Judee K. Burgoon and her colleagues examined three structural features (mediation, proximity, and modality and context richness) that have particular relevance for the presentation of verbal and nonverbal cues in human interaction. They found that mediation, distance, and reduction in some nonverbal channels did not diminish actual decision quality or influence and in some cases actually promoted performance.

REDUCED SOCIAL CUES, ANONYMITY, AND PERSONAL INTIMACY

Therefore, contrary to common sense, the reduced social cues and anonymity of CMC can actually promote intimacy among users. The hyperpersonal model of CMC proposed by Walther states that CMC is sometimes even friendlier and more social than FtF communication. In CMC, users have the opportunity for selective self-presentation and can choose the positive aspects. The reduced social cues in CMC can lead to an idealized perception by the perceiver. The ability to express emotions in text and self-presentation is very important for a social and friendly atmosphere and can lead to the development of friendships. The hyperpersonal communication framework offers an approach to understanding ways in which CMC can be richer than parallel FtF activities. Yifeng Hu and her colleagues conducted a survey of American college students who used IM. Their research showed a positive relationship between amount of IM use and perceived verbal, affective, and social intimacy between friends. This suggests that IM between acquaintances promotes rather than hinders intimacy. Moreover, this study found that frequent conversations via IM actually encourage the desire to meet face to face. Even among strangers, the anonymity of CMC and text-based interaction promotes intimacy. An earlier CMC study by Hu on romantic relationships among Hong Kong college students using IM revealed that lack of social cues decreases evaluation apprehension, thus promoting worry-free self-presentation that allows for a more accurate communication of meaning through text.

REDUCED SOCIAL CUES, ANONYMITY, AND GROUP IDENTITY

The social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE) proposes that, when social cues are scarce and relevant social identities are known and salient in the context of the interaction, group characteristics will be attributed to individuals. Thus, the lack of social cues in CMC can accentuate the unity of the group and cause persons to be perceived as group members rather than as distinctive individuals. Anonymity actually promotes a shift in the kind of self-awareness from the personal to the group self, rather than a loss of self-awareness; that is, individuals tend to identify more as group members rather than as individuals.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Given the widespread use of CMC technologies by children and adolescents, the social psychological effects of CMC have implications for the nature and course of mediated interpersonal communication and organizational communication at all levels, from maintaining friendships to developing intimate relationships, from building one's social network to performing community or other group-level activities.

Research by Brian Murfin suggests that CMC has the potential to foster the development of social and communication skills and abstract thinking for middle school students. The report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project reveals that teenagers' use of the Internet plays a major role in their relationships with their friends, their families, and their schools. Teens generally think that CMC enhances their social life and academic work. They are generally intense users of IM, using it and other online spaces and tools to play with and manage their online identities.

IM, one of the applications of CMC, has been especially popular among adolescents. The first online behavior survey among youth in Hong Kong, conducted in 1997 by Breakthrough, a nonprofit youth organization offering cultural, educational, and service activities to young people in Hong Kong, showed that 75% of teens participated in "instant online communication" activities, among which nearly 70% said they had made friends through the Internet. Two years later, another survey taken by Breakthrough showed that 50% of the middle and high school students used IM as their communication

tool. IM not only strengthened the bond among young people but also became a channel for making new friends. In addition, IM was regarded as a space for free speech and expression of self.

Another area of CMC research on children focuses on learning disabilities. A project undertaken by Elizabeth Keating and Gene Mirus suggested that computer-mediated videotelephone interactions can significantly improve the educational experience of deaf students, who are often cut off in classrooms with hearing students. CMC can permit them to participate in peer activities with other deaf students at other sites via video conference, forming a virtual deaf community.

CMC research is increasingly relevant in the area of online health communication as well. A review by Joseph Walther and Shawn Boyd shows that users of CMC settings in online health sites appreciate the informational and emotional support received from those groups, and find those groups attractive not just because there is no time pressure or geographical boundary but because it provides convenient access, multiple perspectives, anonymity, lack of judgment, ease of locating peers who share the same (rare) disease, and a sense of community and similarity, among other advantages. Modern CMC technologies allow for deliberate and judicious use of social cues, affording users an increased universe of decision making relating to self-presentation and impression management. All of this is likely to enhance adolescents' ability to communicate, both textually and through other modalities.

—Yifeng Hu and S. Shyam Sundar

See also Computer Use, Socialization and; Interactive Media; Interactivity; Internet Use, Psychological Effects of; Media Effects; Online Relationships; Peer Groups, Joint Use of Media in

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COMPUTER USE, AGE DIFFERENCES IN

The majority of American children, even those of preschool age, are using computers. Nearly all 8-to-18-year-olds and almost half those age 6 and under have used a computer. When the word *computer* is mentioned, desktop and laptop computers immediately come to mind, but youth increasingly have

access to handheld devices such as cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs), which do much of what a traditional computer does and sometimes more. Additionally, computer use today is almost (though not completely) synonymous with "going online." This entry covers both online and general use of desktop and laptop computers.

PREVALENCE OF COMPUTER USE BY AGE

Computer use increases steadily with age. Thirty-one percent of 0-to-3-year-olds, 70% of 4-to-6-year-olds, and 98% of 8-to-18-year-olds have used a computer. A combination of studies give a picture of the number of young people, by age, who use a computer on a typical day. About 18% of 0-to-6-year-olds, 38% of 5-to-7-year-olds, and 62% of 8-to-18-year-olds are computer users. Once a child turns 8, there is little difference in children of different ages in terms of how many use a computer on a typical day (59% of 8-to-10-year-olds, 62% of 11-to-14-year-olds, and 65% of 15-to-18-year-olds). However, when looking only at computer use for recreation (for games, instant messaging or IM, surfing the World Wide Web, etc.), we find that teens (11-to-14-year-olds and 15-to-18-year-olds) are more likely to use a computer on a typical day than are tweens (8-to-10-year-olds). Similarly, the proportion of youth who go online for recreation on a typical day increases with age as well. Additionally, some studies find that older wired teens (15-to-17-year-olds) are likely to go online more frequently than their younger peers.

It is important to note that computer ownership increases with age and that young people with a computer at home are far more likely to use a computer on a given day than those without a computer at home. Computer ownership compounds the increases by age in likelihood of computer use.

As a child's age increases, so too does the amount of time spent on a computer and on the Internet. Eight-to-ten-year-olds spend about 37 minutes a day on the computer for fun (excluding schoolwork), 11-to-14-year-olds spend just over an hour a day, and 15-to-18-year-olds devote an hour and 20 minutes daily. Children under 6 years spend an average of 10 minutes a day on the computer. The pattern of daily time spent online for fun follows the same pattern as for recreational computer use: 8-to-10-year-olds spend an average of 25 minutes a day online for fun, 11-to-14-year-olds spend almost 50 minutes, and 15-to-18-year-olds spend about an hour and 6 minutes. This increase in computer and Internet use with age is in direct contrast to the general decline in television viewing with age. (Reported average times spent on various computer activities throughout this piece include those who did not use a computer. The Kaiser Foundation's *Generation M* report by Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout provides more information on patterns of computer use.)

SPECIFIC COMPUTER ACTIVITIES BY AGE

Although computer use increases with age, activities change as children grow up. Computer games, for example, are the recreational computer activity to which the most time is devoted. Younger children, tweens, and young teens are the most avid gamers, with interest and attention waning as children move into later adolescence. Young teens are more likely to play games than older teens, but the average time spent playing computer games does not vary substantially.

Communication is one of the most important computer functions for young people. Whereas interest in computer games decreases with age, interest in IM increases with age. IM, a technology that has existed less than a decade, is one of the most popular uses of the Internet among teenagers. Although only 10% of 8-to-10-year-olds use IM on a typical day, 26% of 11-to-14-year-olds do, and 39% of 15-to-17-year-olds do. The average amount of time devoted to IM increases with age as well, with 8-to-10-year-olds spending an average of 3 minutes a day, 11-to-14-year-olds spending an average of 18 minutes a day, and 15-to-18-year-olds devoting almost half an hour (27 minutes).

Although email is far less popular than faster forms of communication (e.g., IM and text messaging) among young people, likelihood of use of email increases with age. Over a third of 15-to-18-year-olds use email on a typical day, whereas just over a quarter of 11-to-14-year olds do, and just over 1 in 10 8-to-10-year-olds do.

As new technologies have made communication more personal, faster, and more easily accessible, interest in Web-based chat rooms, although never high, seems to be diminishing. Chat rooms are not a popular use of the Internet, and there are no major differences in use by age.

Websites and their related activities, such as shopping and information gathering, garner more attention as young people grow up. The proportion of young people who visit websites on a typical day increases with age: 21% of 8-to-10-year-olds, 34% of 11-to-14-year-olds, and 45% of 15-to-17-year-olds. The average time youngsters devote to websites increase with age as well, with 8-to-10-year-olds spending an average of 8 minutes a day, 11-to-14-year-olds spending 13 minutes, and 15-to-17-year-olds spending 19 minutes.

Computers have become mainstays in young people's media lives, and their importance only increases with age. As adolescents become young adults and enter college, computers surround them, and their proficiency with technology is simply assumed.

—Ulla G. Foehr

See also Chat Rooms; Computer Use, Rates of; Electronic Games, Age and; Email; Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of; Television, Viewer Age and

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COMPUTER USE, GENDER AND

Interactive activities—from computer gaming to instant messaging (IM)—have become a ubiquitous part of youth culture and are popular avenues for education, entertainment, and communication. These technologies, however, are continually evolving, like the experiences of the children who use them. Existing research substantiates that computer behavior patterns for boys and girls have remained stable in some contexts and changed in others. Gender differences are of theoretical interest because young children are thought to develop sex-typed attitudes, preferences, and behaviors through observations of and interactions with the world around them, including the media with which they spend their time.

AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER DIFFERENCES

The research examining gender differences in computing may initially appear inconsistent, with significant works supporting or refuting such differences. Children's media experiences, however, are shaped in important ways over time; thus, gender differences can be more accurately described when considering how computer behaviors, skills, and preferences change as children grow.

Among the youngest of computer users, boys and girls appear to have similar experiences. Sandra Calvert and colleagues analyzed a national sample of parents of children ages 6 months to 6 years and found no significant differences between the computer use habits of boys and girls. The authors suggest newly marketed computer content available to very young children may be equally attractive to both genders. Moreover, in computer interactions, gender differences favoring boys are likely learned over time. From a social learning perspective, children acquire sex-typed behaviors gradually through observation of sex-typed patterns in others. They may also receive approval for "appropriate" sex-typed behaviors and disapproval for "inappropriate" sex-typed behaviors. Therefore, children may internalize sex-role messages

they receive during interactions with computer media, which consequently may affect cognitive, affective, and social development. Those working from the perspective of gender schema theory suggest that personal feelings about characteristics of males and females help individuals choose behaviors that are "appropriate" for their own sex. Particular computer activities may be labeled as "boy" activities, subsequently leading to differential participation levels.

In their 2004 national study *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-to-18-Year-Olds,* Donald Roberts and colleagues found that media ownership patterns of boys and girls significantly differed; boys were more likely to own several different personal media. Although the difference was the largest for video games, it was also present for computers and Internet connections. Boys and girls devote similar amounts of time to computer use, but the specific activities of young males and females differ. In general, boys spend more time playing interactive games, and girls spend more time visiting websites, sending emails, and using IM. Uses and gratifications theorists present a functional approach to media use, whereby consumers become gratified by selecting media according to which media characteristics best fulfill their needs and desires. This theory provides a useful framework for explaining sex differences in youth consumption of computer media and online content with respect to individual preferences, personalities, and experiences. The following discussion introduces two of the most common ways that youth use computers: for interactive games and for online behaviors.

INTERACTIVE GAMING

Interactive gaming researchers often do not differentiate among gaming platforms (i.e., games played on computers, video game consoles like Nintendo, or portable devices); moreover, single game titles are frequently available for multiple platforms. A brief overview is presented describing the gender differences surrounding interactive game play that may exist across platforms.

In a 1999 nationally representative study, *Kids and Media @ the New Millennium,* Roberts and colleagues found that gaming was the most common computer use for youth ages 8 to 18. In their subsequent study, *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-to-18-Year-Olds*, they found that game playing on the computer continued to account for the most minutes per day (19 minutes) followed by IM (17 minutes) and visiting websites (14 minutes). Moreover, boys were twice as likely as girls to have a video game console in their bedrooms (63% vs. 33%), with similar differences found for handheld gaming devices (63% vs. 48%). Studies of online gaming in particular indicate that males are overwhelmingly the most frequent participants. Historically, boys have consistently reported significantly higher preference for and time commitment to playing computer and video games than girls have, in both home and arcade settings.

Content Preferences

To understand the role of interactive media in the lives of children, it is perhaps more important to gather detailed information about time spent using *particular types* of content, not just an index of total use. Interactive game content varies widely, and media effects are partially dependent on that content. Numerous categorization systems have been developed (e.g., television coding systems, the primary action or main goal of the game, and cognitive demands of the game). Evidence from these studies indicates that boys and girls prefer different types of content, with boys preferring and playing sports games and games containing violence. In a large survey of 900 children grades four through eight, Jeanne Funk and colleagues found that girls were more likely than boys to list educational games as favorites, whereas boys preferred sports games. Girls expressed a stronger preference for games containing cartoon fantasy violence, whereas boys more often preferred games categorized as realistic human violence.

These distinctions in content preferences are critical points for understanding the larger issue of identifying how males and females differ in relating to interactive content and design. Indeed, gender differences are apparent in Web content and design preferences. A study of kindergartners conducted by David Passig and Haya Levin determined that boys spent more time on task and were more adept at computer game navigation than girls. In contrast, girls preferred colorful screens with ample text and moderate, slow-moving animation. Color preferences also differed. Girls were partial to red and yellow; boys preferred blue and green.

Numerous observers have suggested that the predominance of masculine themes (e.g., fighting and war) are the likely explanation for the differential appeal of video game and computer technologies to boys and girls. One might also consider the behaviors

required to win numerous interactive games. Often, playing video and computer games encourages players to repeat cycles of competitive, aggressive behaviors, generally considered undesirable for females. The interactive game "culture" is also a prominent part of boys' socialization experiences. Gaming is a collective leisure activity for boys, and boys' tendency to incorporate computing or gaming into friendship networks may influence use at home and at school. In sum, males continue to lead in the areas of gaming, programming, and computer ownership.

INTERNET AND WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW) USE

The Internet and WWW are increasingly pervasive in the daily routines of children and adolescents. Adolescents invest significant amounts of time downloading music, communicating with friends, shopping for fashions and other consumer goods, researching for school, and seeking news and current events information. They rely on information from computer media to define life and self-identity. A majority of teens use the Internet frequently at home and at school because the appealing audio and visual information available via the Internet provides high levels of multisensory stimulation.

"Early" work assessing Internet and Web behaviors provided a glimpse into the role of the Internet in the lives of young people. A national survey conducted in 2000 by the National School Boards Foundation indicated that boys and girls (ages 2–17) were equally involved in using the Internet, albeit in different ways. Girls were more likely to use the Internet for education, schoolwork, e-mail, and chat rooms, whereas boys were interested in entertainment and games. A related research study in 2000 found significant sex differences for several categories of Internet use by adolescents. Males reported using the Internet more frequently than females for fun, games, music searches, and shopping. Females reported more frequent use for information seeking about colleges and fashion. There were sex differences for online game participation, with boys engaging in this activity more frequently. Moreover, boys positively rated sensational Web content and websites containing game cheats and downloads. Girls, however, positively rated information finding. Sex differences were not present for email, chat rooms, and website visitation. In children, boys and girls reported similar motives for using the Internet.

Most recent studies, including data collected in 2004, indicate that differences between males and females have diminished for overall time spent online. When categorizing types of use, however, a stark contrast continues to exist for interactive gaming typified by male users. Those respective users also significantly exceed the overall online time when compared with other user groups. These findings highlight evidence that gender differences are significant for particular interests and preferences of young media consumers.

Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

Instant messaging (AOL, Microsoft Messenger, ICQ) and chat rooms are readily adopted by young media users. In contrast to public CMC, private communication is the primary online activity for adolescents. A 2004 study reported IM as the most popular online activity; the daily average was 40 minutes. Email was also popular. Adolescents generally engage in CMC with those whom they have existing relationships, whereas communication with unknown persons is infrequent. No sex differences were reported for CMC.

Generally, virtual communities are becoming primary sources of social activity. The Internet provides the opportunity to maximize development of virtual communication skills and savvy use of computer media. This illustrates how communication can be successful without face-to-face interactions. Calvert and colleagues found that preadolescent children tend to assume traditional gender roles (i.e., they take on gender roles consistent with their own gender) while communicating in virtual environments. However, the challenge of balancing interpersonal skill development with CMC is evident. With respect to personal development, the Internet and CMC applications provide teens with anonymous platforms for experimentation with social identities. These are opportunities for *role, identity,* and *relationship play.*

IMPLICATIONS OF COMPUTER USE

Early experience with computers has the potential to shape later success in technology-mediated contexts. Childhood is now characterized by early and frequent computer use, preparing children for long-term relationships with computer media. The long-term impact of this early use on development, however, is unclear.

Differential use patterns between boys and girls at young ages may also have important implications. Historically, males have engaged in more frequent use of computer activities when compared to females. Some argue that this can partially be attributed to the mass marketing of computer games to young boys. It has also been suggested that interactive game play has the potential to significantly influence experience with and attitudes toward technology. If such play is an "introduction" to later computer use and computer literacy, boys have an advantage of early experience and comfort with interactive media. Such perceptions or schemas may have detrimental residual effects on females' interest in and use of computer technology. As computer use becomes increasingly ubiquitous across the sexes, some may dismiss the salience of investigations of gender differences in computer behavior. Diminishing sex differences in frequency and categories of use, however, do not translate to similarities of complex cognitive and affective processes in computer-mediated contexts. Instead, empirical investigations of gender differences are warranted and needed to build a comprehensive understanding of the underlying gender structures in human-computer interaction.

—Ronda M. Scantlin and Anna Langhorne

See also Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Electronic Games, Age and; Electronic Games, Gender and; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Instant Messaging

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COMPUTER USE, INTERNATIONAL

During the 1980s and 1990s, the computer—until then a technology used in offices and production facilities—started its diffusion into private households. In this first phase of the digitalization of private media and communication environments, the computers involved were personal computers that offered a limited range of functions. For children and adolescents, the most attractive uses were for computer games and, far behind that, for educational software. In a second phase, linked with the increasing importance of the Internet and online communication in general, online communication access became possible through home computers. Today, the range of technological options for using digital media content and interactive facilities is much broader; computer technology is integrated into different devices like mobile phones, games consoles, personal digital assistants, and so on. Digital media play an increasingly important part in the lives of children and adolescents, not only as devices for entertainment and education but also as part of the socialization process. To understand the role of computers in the lives of young people, it is necessary to consider the global economic framework within which computer use occurs, as well as the impact of competency gaps and inequalities between countries.

GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION

From a global perspective, ownership of a computer cannot be taken for granted by people in all parts of the world. In 2004, according to a compilation of the International Telecommunication Union within the framework of the "Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development," almost 80% of households in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Denmark owned at least one

computer; the respective figures were slightly over 70% for the United States, the Netherlands, and Norway. The average in Western Europe was 62%. The latter figure differs substantially from the figure for Eastern European countries (27.5%), which indicates that the distribution of computers is closely linked to economic conditions. This kind of difference becomes even more obvious when looking at countries in Latin America (e.g., for 2003, Brazil, 15%; Peru, 6%), or Africa (e.g., Morocco, 11% for 2005; Ghana, 1% for 2003).

Looking at statistics of computer ownership over time involves the idea of a linear process of diffusion, in which children and young people as well as adults gradually gain contact with computers and computer-mediated communication. According to a mechanistic model, diffusion could be defined in terms of technical equipment with a built-in social or cultural function. Then, the process of diffusion would be just a question of the quantitative distribution of the new equipment. However, building on previous work by Everett Rogers, Friedrich Krotz and Uwe Hasebrink have pointed out that, although new media usually start their diffusion as merely a technological option involving basic hardware and basic software, the matter is more complex. How this option is put into practice and what purposes it is used for are defined by those who use the new tools, by consumer demand, by marketing strategies, by enthusiasts who develop enhanced hardware and software, and by critics who impose certain limitations on development. This collective network of actions gradually leads to a general image of the new technology that includes general expectations about what can and should be done with the new medium. Thus, the diffusion process is a qualitative and constructive process. It is only by this process that a new technological option is culturally and socially defined as a medium. Several researchers, although of different theoretical backgrounds, have emphasized this difference between technological options and culturally and socially contextualized media.

As a consequence, the diffusion of computer technology may follow different qualitative paths in different countries, leading to different definitions of the computer's place and the role it plays in the everyday lives of children and young people. In a comparative survey of European countries, two typical approaches to computer technology have been identified:

- In some countries (e.g., Sweden and Finland), the computer has been introduced by school and other societal institutions. Here, the new medium is constructed according to institutional criteria—as a tool for learning, as something that teachers and parents approve of and that is seen as important for the future in the so-called information society.
- In some other countries (e.g., Germany), the computer has been introduced by private households. Here, the computer use depends on the actual interests and purposes of children; as a result, computers are introduced as games machines, particularly for boys. Parents, who as a rule are rather skeptical about games, may prefer computers to games consoles because computers allow for other applications and thus provide a better opportunity for other purposes to become more important.

Empirical observations indicate that different societies develop specific patterns of access to technological options, a specific range of applications and services, and specific purposes, attitudes, and motivations that underlie the use of computers. As a consequence, one should overcome some oversimplifications typical of much public and political discourse: There is no such thing as "the" computer, and consequently we will not find "the" computer user. The new technological options are culturally and socially transformed into institutional structures and everyday practices. This transformation process takes place according to the specific conditions of cultures, political frameworks, concrete social situations, and individual dispositions. Therefore, the direction and the results of this process may be very different between countries as well as between social groups within and across countries.

Despite all differences between countries, one common characteristic of the diffusion of computer technology is that—because of the high prices—children and young people can decide only to a limited extent whether to buy a new piece of technical equipment. Such media are expensive and, in addition, are rather complicated to use. Thus, when they become interested in new technologies, young people have to rely significantly on their parents or other adults, who usually are themselves not too familiar with the new options and thus might not support the diffusion process even if children are intrinsically motivated to use computers. On the other hand, many politicians, teachers, and even parents strongly emphasize the importance of media education and computer skills. This might create a kind of extrinsic motivation to use new media and as such support

diffusion. As a consequence, whether children or young people become "early adopters" of new media strongly depends on their parents, their schools, and their social and cultural environments.

COMPUTERS AS TOOLS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

As surveys in different countries show, households with children are more likely to have computers at home, and there is an openness toward new media technologies. One reason for this might be that parents think that computer literacy will be important in enabling their children to cope with challenges at school and at the workplace. Another reason definitely is that many children and adolescents like to deal with computers. One advantage of computers is their multifunctionality; they can be used for very different purposes. As studies in different countries show, playing games is by far the most popular option. Doing some work for school and using educational software are also quite frequent activities; to an increasing extent, so is using the Internet. Due to the improvement of the technology, today's children use their computers also for listening to music and for watching DVDs. An important difference in how boys and girls use the computer is that boys play computer games more often than girls do.

When it comes to the question of how the computer shapes the lives of today's children and adolescents, three arguments seem to be important. First, the role of computers in children's lives is influenced by an *economic perspective.* The introduction and diffusion of digital media are, first of all, an economically motivated process. Politicians in almost all countries view information and communication technologies as top priorities with regard to the future of their respective national economies. With this political support, the paths of diffusion of new media are heavily influenced by an economic model according to which everybody is becoming an individual entrepreneur for her or his own interests, electronically connected within a global cyber-economy. This ideal of the "information society," as outlined in many programmatic documents, has become part of parents' attitudes toward computers and computer-mediated communication and is becoming an increasingly important part of the curricula of educational institutions at all levels.

Second, computers and computer-mediated communication will play an increasingly important role in the process of *socialization.* Children and young people socialize themselves by using computers, particularly by playing games. As Sherry Turkle put it quite early in the diffusion process, the computer is not just a tool for calculations but rather a means to express oneself, to simulate different realities, to experiment with one's ideas. This might widen the range of communicative options and diversity and at the same time support a general trend toward individualization within an electronically mediated global space of communication.

Third, the different paths of new media's diffusion into the everyday lives of young people produce different patterns of *competency gaps and inequalities* between and within cultures and societies. How children and young people realize the new communicative possibilities and develop new communicative skills and social practices depends on several conditions. Investigations of computer access and the kind of computer use show that gender, age, and socioeconomic status are strong influencing factors. In addition, we have noted the drastic differences between the industrialized and less industrialized countries in terms of computer access. Here, the discussion of knowledge and competence gaps and "digital divides" is relevant and may become more and more important in the future. Some evidence suggests that schools can play an important role in providing access to new media, thereby encouraging the development of individual competence in computer use. At the same time, empirical evidence from different countries supports the thesis that, in the future, the relative importance of computer use at home will grow because the school systems do not as yet seem able to keep pace with the development of new hardware and software. Thus, it is unlikely that new media access through schools will reduce existing social inequalities by itself. Therefore, it is a task of governments to create conditions that can help develop cultural practices and competencies related to new media that allow all groups of the population to fulfill their communicative needs, whether or not these can be fulfilled by computer-mediated communication.

—*Uwe Hasebrink*

See also Computer Use, Age Differences in; Computer Use, Gender and; Computer Use, Socialization and; Computer Use in Schools; Digital Divide; Electronic Games; Internet Use, International

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COMPUTER USE, RATES OF

For the first time in history, children's use of a medium, in this case the personal computer, has overtaken their parents' usage rates. A study conducted by National Public Radio reports that 44% of America's youth between the ages of 10 and 17 years use a personal computer from home on a daily basis, and 55% of the young people in this age range access a computer at school at least once per week. Additionally, on any given day 42% of children and adolescents from 12 to 17 years access the Internet, according to a study by Lenhart and colleagues.

The amount of time children and adolescents of various age groups are spending with computers on a daily basis is substantial, according to a national study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Children from 2 to 7 years of age spend an average of 7 minutes per day with a computer. As children get older, they consistently spend more time each day using computers, as children and adolescents from 8 to 18 years old spend approximately a half hour each day with this technology. Although this is a valid average across U.S. homes, usage rates increase substantially when the population of children who have regular access to a computer are specifically considered. On any given day, 65% of young people between the ages of 8 and 18 who have access to a computer in their homes use this technology, whereas only 25% of America's youth without in-home access to computers use them on a daily basis, showing that ease of access clearly impacts those young people who choose to use computers. For only those young people who use a computer daily, the average amount of time spent with the medium is 23 minutes per day for 2-to-7-year-olds and 52 minutes per day for 8-to-18-year-olds. Those children and adolescents who are using computers are spending significant time with the medium.

An important study entitled *Zero to Six: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers*, was conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Children's Digital Media Centers. It is the first national study of media use among the very youngest children, from 6 months to 6 years old. In relation to the computer use, this study found that, on an average day, 27% of 4-to-6-year-olds use a computer, and those who do, spend an average of just over an hour doing so. More than a third (39%) of 4-to-6-year-olds use a computer at least several times each week; 37% of children in this age group can turn the computer on by themselves.

Multiple factors play a role in the access of America's youth to computers and the Internet. Race and ethnicity, parents' education level, and socioeconomic status are the main predictors of children's access to computers in their homes, as demonstrated by the Kaiser Family Foundation's research. Hispanic children spend the least time with computers when compared to African American and white children. Additionally, children whose parents have completed college or some college are significantly more likely to have in-home access to computer than children whose parents who have finished only high school. Moreover, children's access to computers outside of school is directed correlated with higher parental incomes. Although computers have not yet penetrated American households as fully as have other media, such as television and radio, and although many functions of computers are still developing, it is difficult to predict how issues of usage and access are likely to develop in the years of rapid change ahead. This is certainly an area where further research will continue to be needed.

—Andrea M. Bergstrom

See also Computer Use, Age Differences in; Computer Use, Gender and; Computer Use, International; Digital Divide; Digital Literacy

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COMPUTER USE, SOCIALIZATION AND

The use of computers and related electronic media forms has skyrocketed in the past decade. Children now communicate via computers with chat rooms, email, instant messaging, and downloaded information that can be passed on. They surf the Internet and play interactive games. They have cell phones, pagers, wireless devices, MP3s, and electronic organizers. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation study released in 2005, 86% of 8-to-18-year-olds had a computer at home, up from 73% 5 years earlier. Thirty-one percent had computers in their bedrooms, up from 21% in 1999. Internet access at home increased from 47% to 74%, and Internet access in children's own bedrooms increased from 10% to 20% in that time period. The number who go online for more than an hour in an average day more than quadrupled, increasing from 5% to 22% in those 5 years.

A major concern for many is whether the increased time spent with computers isolates children or whether computer use can actually foster socialization. The level of use is a critical factor, as there are significant differences between the impact of light-to-moderate use of computers and the impact of heavy use, whether for game playing, communicating with others, or surfing the Internet. There appear to be fewer negative associations with light-to-moderate levels of computer use, especially when a child or adolescent has many other resources and activities that provide other kinds of information about social interactions and social behavior, as well as real-life experiences from which the individual can learn. A child's or adolescent's reason for computer use is also important and is likely to differ between light or moderate users and heavy users.

Many agree that computer use in moderation does not affect children and their social skills negatively and may even increase their socialization. Many children use email to supplement phone and real-life interactions and contacts with family and friends, to communicate with strangers, to meet new people, and even to test various personas. Moreover, some shy children may invite one or two peers over for activity-based interactions, such as playing computer games, and find that their play triggers conversation. In the school setting, although some regret the change that may occur in relationships between students and teachers and among students when computers are used more often, others think that the greater use of computers leads to increased cooperative work and interaction in the classroom.

Although the Internet provides a huge informational advantage, it is also used by many children as entertainment for many hours, most of which are spent in isolation from other family members. Some claim that computer use displaces other family activities, such as talking, playing board games, and reading together, and that it results in less social interaction with individuals outside the family as well. Others have found that time spent on the Internet primarily displaces television viewing rather than other nonmedia activities, such as spending time with friends, playing sports, or doing homework. There are concerns, however, about the discussion groups children use and the relationships they may form anonymously with strangers, especially with the possibility of face-to-face meetings. There is also concern that heavy use of the Internet can lead to depression, loneliness, and isolation.

One cannot assume causal direction, however, when relationships or associations emerge between computer use and reduced time spent with others. Spending inordinate amounts of time on a computer may lead to social isolation and little time with peers and families, but the reverse can also be true. Difficulties within the family or with peers might lead children to avoid those problems or to try to escape difficult situations by spending more time in what they perceive as the relative safety of solitary activities on the computer. That is, spending many hours by oneself at a computer could be a cause or an effect of social problems or other difficulties.

Playing games, whether on a computer or on a portable game system, has become a particularly important part of most children's play and of the social interactions of others. According to the National Institute on Media and the Family and other researchers, video game playing can have both positive and negative social effects. It can provide entertainment and can lead to opportunities for children and adults to play together, and not all games involve high levels of graphic violence. Some games require good cognitive skills and involve complex problem-solving skills and cognitive strategies. On the other hand, some research has suggested that heavy amounts of gameplaying can be associated for some players with social isolation, more aggressive behavior, more exposure to violence and stereotypes, and displacement of other activities, such as reading and

the real-life social interactions involved in playing with friends. Important gender differences exist both in the level of use and in the types of games that are played most often. Boys typically spend more time playing video games, and they more often play action-oriented games, sports, and violent games. Girls tend to play more language-based and puzzle-type games.

As children learn most of their basic social skills such as cooperation, kindness, and effective communication from their real-life interactions and the consequences of those interactions, parental guidance and monitoring are important to ensure a healthy balance between computer-based and real-life social experiences. Longitudinal research is also necessary to assess the long-term effects of computer use on social development and behavior.

—Judith Van Evra

See also Computer Use; Media Exposure; School-Age Children, Impact of the Media on

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COMPUTER USE IN SCHOOLS

The use of computers by school students can be categorized according to five headings: computer-aided learning, information retrieval and processing, design and production, communication, and the study of the computer itself. All these uses can be subsumed, in a general way, under the heading "e-learning." A general theme that runs through all use is the current convergence of computers as information processors and as the successors of older technologies of representation, such as photography, cinema, print, and radio. This convergence is leading to shifts in the curricular use of computers, just as it is leading to wider cultural shifts in society. Although schools often respond positively to new opportunities, they are also often at a loss to know how to respond to new forms of digital culture among young people.

It is difficult to give an accurate general picture of school use of computers because of the economic digital divide, which produces widely different patterns of computer availability and connectivity—not only between the developed and developing worlds but also between different groups within individual countries, and between wealthier and less wealthy European economies, including, for instance, new member states in the European Union. The following descriptions are, therefore, broadly typical of schools in the developed world. However, digital divides exist within these countries too; the digital divide therefore has traditionally been a powerful rationale for providing students with computers to compensate for lack of access at home for children from poorer families. Recent studies show that, in countries where access to computers is lower (such as Italy and Greece), provision of computers in schools is also lower, so the resources available to overcome the digital divide are least available where they are needed most. Finally, this research also points to a different kind of divide: between children's uses of computers at home (driven by social communication, play, and entertainment) and "official" uses of computers in schools (driven by information retrieval). Some argue that this divide reduces real access by alienating children.

COMPUTER-AIDED LEARNING

Computer-aided learning (CAL) covers a wide range of specialized software, which uses computers to present content (through media such as CD-ROM novels, picture books, or textbooks), to teach skills (such as literacy or numeracy), and to alter the nature of classroom presentation (using programs such as PowerPoint or Interactive Whiteboard technology). Key questions about such software are whether a given package improves the nature of learning by, for instance, increasing learner autonomy or making skill acquisition more efficient, or whether it simply replicates older predigital practices, such as "drill 'n' skill" approaches to spelling or arithmetic.

INFORMATION PROCESSING AND RETRIEVAL

Computers are used in this sense in much the same way as they might be in the adult world. Generic tools such as spreadsheets and databases are widely used across the curriculum. The Internet is an increasingly important source of information for students working in all curriculum contexts, although its uses go far beyond information retrieval. The growing rate of broadband access for schools provides an exponential growth of available information in verbal, visual, and moving-image formats. This development also raises questions about what new skills are needed for searching, selecting, and discriminating between information sources.

More specialized software might include graphical calculators in math that represent calculations as visual symbols, computer modeling of an ecological system in science, or digital archives available for an enormous range of subject areas.

COMPUTERS FOR DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Again, students use computers to design, compose, and make products, texts, and systems in much the same way the adult world does, and they often use industry standard suites for graphic design, Web design, animation, and video. Examples of design work would include computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM); graphic design work; computer-controlled systems (such as stage lighting systems); student Web pages; digital videos and animations, music compositions, and even student-designed computer games. The purposes of using such software are complex and vary according to the curriculum area. Designs may be created as exercises in aesthetic genres important within subject areas, such as photomontage in art, minimalist compositions in music, or horror films in English and media studies. Alternatively, the purpose may be consolidation of an area of knowledge, as in a student film showing the processes of coastal erosion in geography. Finally, the goal may be to develop an understanding of the design process itself, whether this be principles of graphic or musical composition, of the mechanical control of events in the physical world, or of the grammatical principles of writing or film editing.

The design of new media texts by school students is concomitant with the study and analysis of such texts in media curricula in a number of countries. In this field, the study of "old media," such as film, television, print media, and radio, is changing as these media converge on computer platforms. However, it is fair to say that schools have an uneasy relationship with the cultures of new media, so that the leisure domains represented by digital multichannel television, digital radio, and computer games are frequently regarded with suspicion or even banned outright. On the other hand, there are moves to recognize the importance and value of such uses and cultures, with experiments in the use of personal handheld computers, mobile phone texting, and computer games for the delivery of curricular experiences, to construct playful learning, or even as objects of study.

COMMUNICATION: INTERNET, RESEARCH, EMAIL, INTRANETS

Computers are used for an increasingly diverse range of communication in schools, between students, between students and teachers, and between school and home. Many schools have intranets that provide not only resources and information but also communication options, such as posting homework or consulting teachers. In many schools, students use e-mail to post work or to communicate with friends in exchange projects. Some schools have experimented with videoconferencing for similar purposes. More radically, some schools have explored the value of e-learning with students at a distance from school buildings or other centralized resources. In some cases, this distance learning is a response to geographical factors, such as widely dispersed communities in the Australian bush.

As with forms of representation rooted in the leisure domain and the media cultures of young people, schools have ambivalent relationships with some communication technologies. The growth of global networks on the Internet, as well as local networking and mobile wireless communications (such as mobile phone image sending), has caused some anxiety in schools about their growing inability to monitor, control, and regulate students' communications. At one extreme, this debate has led to rigid forms of control, such as using Internet filter software to prevent students from accessing proscribed sites

and banning chat and instant messaging facilities. At the other extreme, it is argued that young people can learn about Internet risks only through guided experience, that censorship is ineffectual in such a diverse and unpredictable context, and that the answer lies in education rather than protection.

LEARNING ABOUT COMPUTERS

The final use of computers in school involves computers as objects of study in their own right. Students learn aspects of information and communication technology (ICT) that include its ability to structure information, to communicate, to simulate real processes, and to control real objects. This approach to computers as an area of study in their own right leads to accredited courses and programs in higher education.

EFFECTS ON LEARNING

The use of computers in schools has always been guided by the assumption that it will improve learning. However, this assumption has been often untested, driven by government policy and rhetoric rather than research findings. An example is the UK government's rhetoric in the late 1990s about the "information superhighway" and the subsequent implementation of a digital curriculum. When these assumptions are tested against research, the results can be contradictory. A 2003 government review of the research literature in the UK by Cox and colleagues reported generally positive effects of the use of ICT across all curriculum areas. In contrast, a systematic review of international research literature on effects of ICT on literacy by Andrews et al. found no conclusive evidence of positive effects in this area. Primary research in specific applications such as the use of digital video by Reid and colleagues found that the digital medium does provide real learning opportunities but not that teaching and other factors are just as important.

—Andrew Burn

See also Chat Rooms, Social and Linguistic Processes in; Digital Divide; Digital Literacy; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; Internet Use, Education and; Media Education, Schools and; School-Age Children, Impact of the Media on; Websites, Children's

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CONSUMER DEVELOPMENT, PHASES OF

Children's consumer behavior has often been studied within the paradigm of consumer socialization. Consumer socialization is the rather effortless process by which children learn the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to function as a consumer. Although there is no single definition of a consumer, most definitions that have been employed seem to entail similar characteristics. A consumer is able (1) to feel and express wants and preferences; (2) to search to fulfill these wants and preferences; (3) to make a choice and a purchase; and (4) to evaluate the product and its alternatives. Research has shown that children of around 12 years of age have all the characteristics of a consumer. From birth, they can express their wants and preferences; by age 2, take actions to satisfy their wants and preferences; by age 5, make a choice and buy products, and by age 8, critically evaluate a product and compare options. Thus, although the consumer behavior of children continues to develop during adolescence, children have become acquainted by age 12 with all aspects of their consumer behavior, at least in a rudimentary form.

FEELING AND EXPRESSING WANTS AND PREFERENCES

Initially, the development of the consumer behavior of children occurs primarily through the interaction between parents, television advertising, and shops. Even from the moment of their birth, children have particular wants and preferences for tastes, smells, colors, and sounds. From this moment, they also begin to communicate their wants and preferences to their parents. However, the expression of wants and preferences is initially primarily reactive: The child indicates when the stimulus offered is pleasant or unpleasant.

SEEKING TO FULFILL WANTS AND PREFERENCES

Once children reach 2 years of age, they begin to express their wants and preferences more actively. During this period, children discover that they have their own wills and begin to experiment with this. Children now begin actively to ask for products they like. This happens particularly when the products are in their direct vicinity, for example in the shop or on television. One study revealed that 16% of the toddlers and preschool children spontaneously asked for one or more products (candies, toys) during a 40-minute video with commercials and children's programs. I don't see this info . . . . The children from the ages of 2 to 3 asked particularly for food, whereas the 3-to-5-year-olds asked for food and toys.

Children can sometimes be very persistent when asking for something. This can lead to some trying situations for parents, for example when they are with their children in a supermarket or toy shop. In one study, 41% of parents of children of 2 years admitted to sometimes having conflicts with their children during shopping. This percentage rose sharply for the age group 2 to 5. With children of 3, some 59% of parents had a conflict at some time, and with children of 5 years of age, this rose to 70% of parents. It was striking how the number of shop conflicts began to decrease at 6 years of age. These results are in line with previous studies, which revealed that parent-child conflict situations in the shop showed a curvilinear pattern.

Why do store conflicts increase during the toddler and preschool phase, and why do they decrease again between the ages of 6 and 8? First, children of 5 to 6 years of age become better able to delay gratifications. Children younger than 6 have hardly any strategies to resist temptations. If they see something attractive, they focus all their attention on the enticing aspects of this stimulus and find it very difficult to resist. Parents can, of course, try to divert their children's attention away from the temptation, but it is only once children reach 5 or 6 years of age that they are able to *independently* use techniques to delay gratification.

The decrease in store conflicts also has to do with the growing ability of children to apply sophisticated persuasion techniques. Studies have shown that very young children quite often ask and whine as well as show anger in order to persuade their parents. Older children, in contrast, tend to use more sophisticated persuasion techniques, such as negotiation, argumentation, "soft-soaping," arousing sympathy, and even white lies.

MAKING CHOICES AND PURCHASES

At 5 years of age, children begin to make purchases independently. The process of choosing and paying for products in the shop initially takes place with the parents there. When children are 5 years old, three fourths have already bought something themselves with the parents present, while one fifth have bought things fairly regularly *without* their parents there. These percentages increase rapidly as the children grow older. By the time they reach 8 years of age, the majority of children have bought something without their parents. At this age, about a half the children already go to the shop regularly to buy things on their own. This is usually a nearby shop or supermarket within safe walking distance.

EVALUATING PRODUCTS AND THEIR ALTERNATIVES

To be able to evaluate products and compare them with alternatives, children need the ability to critically evaluate products on suitability and quality. Various studies have shown that the critical ability of children develops rapidly after around 8 years of age. At that age, every product that they look at is studied in detail and compared with other products. When a child of 8 gets a new pair of sport shoes, each part of the shoe, from the laces to the logo, is carefully examined and compared to the features of other shoes. These older children are also very critical of media products, for example, if they do not look exciting, fun, or trendy. At 8 years of age, children begin to realize that commercials are

made to entice them to buy products. Then, these commercials also no longer escape their critical examination. In contrast to younger children, who primarily see commercials as entertainment, children of this age can be very skeptical about commercials.

—Patti M. Valkenburg

See also Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Purchase Influence Attempts

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CONSUMERISM

Children have long had an active and varied relationship to consumer goods and consumer culture. With the rise of childhood as a distinct modern social category in the West during the 18th century, special goods for children also developed. Early examples include children's literature, children's apparel, and, of course, toys. By the early 20th century, a wider range of children's products were appearing on the market, such as candies, collectibles, child-oriented movies, radio shows, comic books, and the like. Department stores began catering to children not only through product selection but also by constructing special child-themed areas of stores. As the century progressed, children became not only consumers but participants in the ideology and way of life that scholars call *consumerism*. That is, they were adopting a set of values, attitudes, and practices that privilege the acquisition, possession, and use of marketed goods and services.

In the second half of the 20th century, children's involvement in consumer culture continued to grow. In the 1950s, the introduction of television provided an opportunity for child-directed programming and the advertising to fund it. Although a variety of products were represented in the early days of television, toys and sugared cereals were particularly prominent and continue to be important sources of advertising revenue today. Children of this era became swept up in consumer fads, such as the Davy Crockett fad that swept the United States in the 1950s with the airing of Disney's Crockett series.

In the 1980s, the landscape of children's consumer involvement began to change. One factor was the growing purchasing power available to youth, which was driven by rising parental and grandparental monetary transfer to children. Official estimates of this phenomenon are not available, but industry researcher James McNeal estimates that American children aged 4 to 12 made $6.1 billion in purchases in 1989, $23.4 billion in 1997, and $30 billion in 2002, an increase of 400%. The top spending category, a third of the total, is for sweets, snacks, and beverages, followed by toys. Older children aged 12 to 19 accounted for an estimated $170 billion in personal spending in 2002.

In addition, society was undergoing far-reaching changes in ideological attitudes toward children. Authoritarian and patriarchal family patterns of earlier decades were being replaced by far more democratic and egalitarian family styles, and children became far more empowered in household decision making. McNeal estimates that children aged 4 to 12 directly influenced $310 billion of adult purchasing in 2002 and "evoked" another $340 billion, and that the size of this influence market is growing at 20% per year. Influence purchases include a wide variety of food items, restaurant expenditures, vacation destinations and hotels, tourist sites, technology products, children's apparel and toys, leisure expenditures, and even the choice of family vehicle.

Furthermore, in 1997 the average child aged 6 to 12 spent more than 2-1/2 hours a week shopping, a full hour more than in 1981. Children spent as much time shopping as visiting, twice as much time shopping as reading or going to church, five times as much as playing outdoors, and half as much time shopping as playing organized sports. More children go shopping each week (52%) than read (42%), go to church (26%), participate in youth groups (25%), play outdoors (17%), or spend time in household conversation (32%).

A third change was the establishment of child-targeted cable television networks and programming, such as Nickelodeon, Disney, and the Cartoon

Network. This expanded the potential for direct television advertising to children, which until that time had been confined to Saturday- and Sunday-morning television plus the after-school time block. Furthermore, television viewing time increased substantially and remains high, at an estimated daily 3 hours and 51 minutes for children aged 8 to 18 in 2005. A Kaiser Foundation study estimates total media time to be 6 hours and 21 minutes per day. Some researchers have argued that childhood has entered a "postmodern" phase. Advertising has also expanded beyond television to radio, the Internet, public schools, cultural institutions, and everyday life (through peer-to-peer marketing) as advertisers compete intensively to capture children's money, enthusiasm, and loyalty for brands. The volume of marketing and advertising to children rose dramatically, from an estimated $2 billion in 1999 to $12 billion in 2002.

As a result of these trends, children have become far more enmeshed in consumer culture than at any time in history. They are now intensely brand aware, even at ages 2 and 3, and product requests become very heavily brand specific as children age. Youth advertising has shifted from a utilitarian orientation on intrinsic product qualities to highly symbolic messages which emphasize the "sign" value of brands. There has been an intensification of what Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson have called "sign wars," that is, corporate competition centered on images, and an accelerating spiral of changing symbolism. Furthermore, children's products are no longer in their historic location at the bottom of the price-and-quality spectrum but are in a continuous process of upscaling with respect to luxury, status value, and quality. Children increasingly desire and purchase adult versions or styles in categories such as consumer electronics and designer apparel.

Survey data reflect children's growing sense of materialism and concern about consumption. One national survey of found that more than a third of all children aged 9 to 14 would rather spend time buying things than doing almost anything else; more than a third "really like kids that have very special games or clothes;" more than half agree that "when you grow up, the more money you have, the happier you are;" and 62% say that "the only kind of job I want when I grow up is one that gets me a lot of money." A growing body of psychological research finds that adolescents who hold more materialistic values have lower well-being. In one study, children who became more "consumer involved," as measured by a 16-item scale of behaviors and attitudes, were at greater risk for depression, anxiety, self-esteem, psychosomatic complaints, and poorer relations with their primary parent.

—Juliet B. Schor

See also Advertising, Exposure to; Advertising, Market Size and; Advertising, Materialism and; Advertising on Children's Programs; Consumer Development, Phases of

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CONTRACEPTIVE ADVERTISING

Few would argue that sex does not permeate the media. Research by Dale Kunkel and his colleagues shows not only that the incidence of sexual content on television has risen steadily over the years but also that the media may serve as important sex educators for young people. Yet there are few messages on

television that help children, adolescents, and young adults learn about responsible sexual behavior and sexual health. Until recently, condoms and other contraceptive products were considered forbidden to advertise on television, but they have recently begun to make an appearance.

NETWORK POLICIES

Three of the six broadcast networks as well as numerous cable channels have abandoned longstanding self-regulated policies prohibiting advertisements for contraceptive products on television. Fox was the first network to accept paid condom ads in 1991, with CBS following in 1998 and NBC in 1999. Several channels still prohibit advertising for condoms even though they accept ads for other types of birth control products; for example, ABC, whose channels do run condom commercials, often have restrictions governing times they can be shown and how they may be advertised. Numerous cable channels also accept condom advertisements, including MTV, Comedy Central, CNN, BET, TNT, USA, and TBS.

ABC, WB, and UPN executives continue to bar condom advertising on their networks. UPN aired a condom advertisement for Trojan on one occasion in 1998, but responses from affiliates were so negative that no condom ads have been aired on the network since. The exclusion of condom ads as well as ads for other contraceptive products is still presently enforced, although UPN does broadcast public service announcements (PSAs) discussing HIV/AIDS and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases.

Condoms are not the only form of birth control that continues to encounter difficulties being advertised on television. Blairex Laboratories, the company that manufactures Encare, a vaginal spermicide suppository, attempted to air a commercial that discussed pregnancy prevention on television, but they were rejected by ABC. Fox also refused to air the ad during its prime-time programming schedule on the grounds that, although the network does air condom ads, it does not air products for certain other contraception products or for other products that may be considered controversial. The Encare commercial was finally aired on NBC and CBS, under time restrictions, as well as on the USA Network in 2001.

PUBLIC OPINION

A national survey of 1,142 adults conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) has recently determined that 71% of Americans are in favor of showing condom advertisements on television. Thirty-seven percent of those in favor say that condom ads should be allowed to be shown at any time during the day, and 34% are in favor of airing condom ads only at certain times, such as after 10 p.m., when younger children are less likely to be viewing. One in four Americans still believes that condom ads have no place on television, and such ads have been the subject of criticism by conservative groups from this population.

Americans between the ages of 18 and 49 years old are significantly more likely to be in favor of airing condom ads than are Americans over the age of 50. Among adults under the age of 50, 82% support showing condom ads on television, in comparison to only 60% of respondents over 50. According to this research, more people are opposed to showing beer ads (34%) on television than to showing condom ads (25%).

A test conducted during KFF's research determined that most viewers do not object to seeing condom ads during regular television programming. Advertisements for condoms were rated similarly to the other product ads in this study, such as ads for Allegra (an allergy drug), Toyota Camry, Juno (an Internet service), and Sears. This research also indicates that, even for those who were not in favor of condom ads on television, the viewers did not provide negative assessments of the networks on which the ads were aired, the programs during which they were aired, or the other advertisers whose commercials appeared during the same program.

PUBLIC POLICY

Several factors are responsible for the increasing presence of condom advertisements on television. These include the need to increase HIV/AIDS awareness in the United States since the 1980s, the increasing pervasiveness of sexual content in media programming, the FDA's landmark decision to loosen regulations on advertisements for prescription drugs on TV, and a major $33 million advertising campaign put forth by Johnson and Johnson for their birth control pill Ortho Tri-Cyclen. Even though some networks are clearly

lightening their regulations, advertising for condoms still remains more restricted than advertising for many other products, including other forms of contraception such as the birth control pill.

SOCIAL MARKETING

Although contraceptive ads are sometimes avoided by social marketers, research indicates that television messages promoting condom and other contraceptive use can be highly effective in capturing the attention of the teen population. The social marketing campaign Project ACTION, which was conducted during the early 1990s, is believed to have increased teen condom use with casual partners from 72% to 90% and to have reduced the number of teenagers reporting sexual activity from 82% to 75% in Portland, Oregon. The campaign, which used PSAs, condom vending machines, and teen talk shows about AIDS, was launched by Population Services International (PSI) in 1992 to promote teenage condom use. As part of the campaign, an advertising agency developed TV spots that featured teens fantasizing about sexual encounters being "showered" with condoms falling from the sky. The final words directed viewers to condom vending machines: "Don't even THINK about sex . . . without a condom. Find this condom machine." Local TV and radio stations aired these safe-sex messages totaling 2,800 minutes of PSA time, 78 minutes of news coverage, and 90 minutes of radio. More than 85,000 condoms were sold through vending machines from 1992 to 1994, demonstrating the campaign's effectiveness. It will remain important to document how the acceptance of contraceptive advertising continues to progress in the future.

—Andrea M. Bergstrom

See also Contraceptive Information, Online; Contraceptive Information, Television and; Sex, Media Impact on

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CONTRACEPTIVE INFORMATION, ONLINE

Although the amount of time and attention that young people spend on the Internet provides an ideal opportunity for communicating about sexual health, few efforts have used the Web for this purpose. The Internet's ability to relay information on demand is ideal for teenagers, who often lack transportation and access to health-care providers. The anonymity of accessing information online may enable more teenagers to seek answers to their questions, questions they would never dare to ask in person. And, although the Internet may contain ample misinformation, studies have shown that careful search techniques can successfully pull up educational information without pornography. Finally, the Internet may be the only source of comprehensive, accurate sexual health information at a time when school-based curricula, at best, are becoming increasingly incomplete.

Of the nation's estimated 144 million regular Internet users, about 31% regularly use the Net for health information, and many of them are teenagers. In 2003, roughly 27 million of the nation's regular Internet surfers were between the ages of 2 and 17. Many teens use this new medium for sexual information. Although teens say they prefer to get sexual education from their parents, 44% report learning about sexual issues from the Internet. Yet, public health educators have done little to examine the viability of the Internet for this role.

Simultaneously, U.S. adolescents face increasing risks of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and continued high rates of unintended pregnancies. About one in four sexually active youth are infected with an STD by age 24. About 800,000 teenagers age 19 or younger become pregnant each year, a figure that, although representing a decline from the early 1990s, is still higher than the rate for most developed countries.

The coincidence of these two trends—increasing use of the Internet for health information and an adolescent STD epidemic—provides health educators with a unique opportunity to convey sexual health information and disseminate contraceptives. Online sex stores make it easy for adolescents to buy contraceptive products such as condoms from the comfort of their own computers. This mode of perusal and acquisition offers the advantages of anonymity, accessibility, and affordability, while at the same time exposing users to the disadvantages of inappropriate and inaccurate information.

The Internet's uniquely intermediate status between a mass medium and interpersonal communication makes it an ideal venue for communicating sensitive information because it offers anonymity and sophisticated message tailoring. Several exemplary sexuality education sites are specifically designed for teenagers: Planned Parenthood Federation of America's www.teenwire.org, Sex, Etc.'s www.sexetc.org, and Kaiser's www.kff.org.

The Internet may be especially useful in circumstances where alternative sources of sexual information are limited. Recent federal legislation mandates that schools teach abstinence until marriage unless a broader curriculum is approved by parents and local school boards. The abstinence-until-marriage platform excludes sexually active straight teens and all gay and lesbian people because gay marriage is illegal in 49 states. Yet, in 2005, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services dedicated nearly $170 million in funding to abstinence-only programs, more than twice the amount allocated in 2001, while comprehensive, medically accurate sex education will receive no dedicated funding, according to a 2004 report issued by Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-CA). The report also stated that the majority of curricula (11 out of 13) funded by the federal abstinence initiative, SPRANS (Special Programs of Regional and National Significance Community-Based Abstinence Education), contain scientific errors and distortions, along with misleading information about the effectiveness of contraceptives, the risks of abortion, and the risks of sexual activity. Taboos on discussing sexuality and other important health topics leave many adolescents unarmed with preventive skills.

The unregulated nature of the Internet also provides a unique opportunity to address subjects that are elsewhere deemed taboo, although this open status may soon give way to screening devices and other regulations. Although the bulk of the Communication Decency Act of 1996 was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on the grounds that it violated the First Amendment, federal attempts are ongoing to regulate children's access to sexual content online.

The Internet has the additional advantage of being able to relay information on demand, meeting young people's needs when they occur, especially important for giving youth access and information about emergency contraception pills (ECP). Before nonprescription ECP was available, Planned Parenthood affiliates provided online medical assessments for ECP in several states, breaking down the barrier for women who lacked access to providers' offices. Today, websites are used as educational tools about ECP side effects and post-marketing feedback. Young people are often not connected to health-care services and may lack transportation or resources to contact providers.

The Internet can facilitate personal decision making, risk assessment, and online peer support through message boards, chat rooms, and email. Online support groups have been shown to positively impact people with AIDS, and the Internet has been shown to promote self-efficacy and model communication skills, prerequisites to safe sex practice and STD prevention.

Clearly, a few limitations remain. For one, inaccurate or inappropriate information is rampant. One study found an abundance of pornography when searching for sexual health websites. Others have found serious misinformation regarding family planning methods. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has shut down numerous sites selling illegal birth-control products, including home abortion kits, female self-sterilization kits, and fake birth-control patches. Other researchers have found contradictory information on United Nations and World Health Organization websites about the risk of venous thromboembolism from third-generation oral contraceptives. A 2003 study discovered that many websites misrepresent the IUD's contribution to risks of pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy, and infertility.

Perhaps the greatest impediment to using the Internet as a vehicle for reducing adolescent sexual health risks has to do with access. Although two thirds of urban and suburban Americans are online, only about half of their rural counterparts are connected. Furthermore, poorer users spend less time online; households earning below $25,000 account for just 13% of total online traffic.

Unfortunately, little is known about the effects of online sexual health education and how teenagers use

the Internet to prevent STDs and unwanted pregnancy. At least two articles have reviewed online HIV/AIDS resources, and two examined STD prevention websites. None, however, looked at the effects of specific sites.

We do have reason to believe the Internet can be an effective health communicator. Some patients prefer online counseling to face-to-face interaction, and people may be more likely to be truthful to a computer than to a clinician in reporting HIV risk factors. Adolescents have also been shown more likely to report risky behavior (including sexual acts, drug use and violence) when using audio computer-assisted self-interviewing (audio-CASI) technology, compared to more traditional self-administered questionnaires.

—Sarah N. Keller

See also Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Internet Use, Gender and; Pornography, U.S. Public Policy on; Public Health Campaigns; Sexual Information, Internet and; Television, Prosocial Content and

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CONTRACEPTIVE INFORMATION, TELEVISION AND

Despite the proliferation of explicit sexual themes in entertainment programming and commercials on television, ads for birth-control devices are still considered taboo among both media companies and many viewers in the United States. It was not until the late 1980s that some networks reversed their policy against airing any contraceptive commercials in paid programming. Although the causal relationship is not clear, research suggests a correlation between adolescent sexual activity and consumption of sexual content on television. This finding, together with the high rates of teen pregnancy in the United States, suggests that mass media could play a role in contraceptive education. However, unlike a number of other countries, the United States has made limited use of mass media for public health messages. Although there are some instances of such efforts, these examples are few and far between, and their effects on teenage behavior have not been clearly evaluated.

With most citing the threat of AIDS, a number of TV stations and print media outlets began accepting condom advertising in 1987. First, San Francisco's KRON-TV, an NBC affiliate, announced it would end its ban and aired three 15-second spots for Trojan condoms in February of that year. Following KRON's lead, all three network affiliates in Detroit—ABC, NBC and CBS—aired advertisements for condoms, as have a number of major print media, including the *New York Times*, Time, Inc. publications, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. The reaction in San Francisco was very positive; only 2 out of 100 viewers complained. At about the same time, local TV network affiliates around the country also began showing ads for the disposable contraceptive sponge, leading to a doubling in the number of product inquiries received by the manufacturer.

The networks also have a history of rejecting family planning public service announcements, claiming they are too controversial. In 1985, the networks refused to air a PSA entitled "The Facts," which told

young people, “It’s okay to say ‘no,’” but that if they do have sex, then the pill and condom are the safest birth-control methods. Network officials claimed that many of their viewers did not agree with birth control, that they did not want to offend viewers who were opposed to such ads on religious grounds, and that they feared offending existing advertisers. Others said contraception should be discussed only in public affairs and news programs, because news hosts could allow both sides to present their points of view.

Public health experts, meanwhile, questioned the networks’ wisdom, pointing out that the United States leads industrialized countries, with nearly 1 million pregnancies each year for girls ages 15 to 19. The networks’ position was questionable, critics argueed, because daytime soaps and prime-time series such as *Dynasty* routinely glamorized sex without suggesting its risks.

Indeed, over the past two decades, the sexual content on television has increased in frequency and explicitness but has seldom included depiction of the use of contraceptives. Concurrently, the age of initiation of heterosexual intercourse has decreased, and the number of teenaged pregnancies has remained high. A recent survey of 1,000 12-to-14-year-old adolescents found that those who watched a larger number of sexy television shows were more likely to have engaged in sexual behavior than those who viewed a smaller proportion of sexual content on television. This relationship held across race and gender groups and regardless of perceived peer encouragement to engage in sex. Although causal direction is not clear from these data, the relationship suggests either that sexual activity results in increased interest in sexual content in the media or that viewing such content leads to sexual activity—or both. In either case, the finding points to the need for further research and increased discussion and portrayal of the use of contraceptives on television.

Compared to a number of other countries around the world, the United States has not relied extensively on mass media to educate the public about sexual health. Great Britain launched a $30 million, government-funded campaign in 1987 featuring TV ads with the word *AIDS* chiseled on a gravestone; similar ads were run in Denmark, Norway, and West Germany. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded numerous family planning and condom promotion media campaigns throughout the third world, where researchers have found that women who view family planning messages on television, radio, and print media are more likely to use contraceptives than are those who see fewer messages. In Nigeria, in 1993, women who had seen pro–family planning music videos featuring the popular music artist King Sunny Adé were significantly more likely (11%) to be using modern contraceptives than those who did not watch the programming.

Relatively few such campaigns have been conducted in the United States. One exception is the Campaign for Our Children, designed to reduce teen pregnancy in Baltimore, Maryland, in the mid-1980s. The campaign, which included dramatic billboards and television and radio spots, has been credited with contributing to a significant decrease in teen pregnancies. Project ACTION, a U.S. social marketing campaign modeled after a project in Zaire, is believed to have increased teen condom use with casual partners from 72% to 90% and to have reduced the number of teenagers reporting sexual activity from 82% to 75% in Portland, Oregon. The campaign, which used public service announcements (PSAs), condom vending machines, and teen talk shows about AIDS, was launched by Population Services International (PSI) in 1992. More than 85,000 condoms were sold through vending machines from 1992 to 1994.

Perhaps more promising in American media culture are incidents of messages embedded in existing TV dramas. A number of nonprofit agencies have been working closely with Hollywood producers and directors to integrate sexual health plots into scripts of popular TV dramas. A groundbreaker was a 1987 episode of *Kate & Allie* in which Allie has a heart-to-heart with her daughter about having sex with a boyfriend. An episode of *Cagney & Lacey* showed Mary Beth discussing condoms with her son. The long-running hit show *Beverly Hills 90210,* with editorial consultation from the Advocates for Youth Media Project, featured high school characters who either waited to have sex or used contraceptives. The Kaiser Family Foundation has worked with top TV shows such as *ER* to include health information and has partnered directly with popular teen-oriented networks, including MTV, Black Entertainment Television, and UPN on public education campaigns that have included both public service advertising and health content integrated into popular sitcoms and dramas.

—Sarah N. Keller

See also Advertising, Sexuality in; Center for Media Education (CME); Contraceptive Advertising; HIV/AIDS, Media Prevention Programs and; Media Education Foundation; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation; Television, Prosocial Content and

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COVIEWING

Coviewing, the shared experience of media use among two or more individuals, represents one way in which parents and other significant adults exert an influence over the uses and effects of media by and on children and adolescents. In media effects research, *coviewing* usually refers to parents and children watching television together. More recently, some scholars have broadened their definition to include co-use of the Internet and gaming technologies. Coviewing provides children with an opportunity to observe their parents as models of appropriate media use behavior but represents a relatively passive intervention strategy. Other routes to parental influence include general communication norms, explicit rule making, and active discussion of media, usually referred to as *mediation, active mediation, instructive mediation,* or *evaluative guidance*.

Analysts need to distinguish between coviewing and active mediation because coviewing can occur with or without discussion. Despite the popular view that coviewing should benefit children, coviewing's value is questionable if done without significant evaluative discussion. Often, parents and children watch television together without discussing media content or without discussing it critically, doing so primarily because they like the content and want to share time together. As a result, children appear to interpret coviewing as endorsement. Accordingly, scholars have found that coviewing can increase perceived realism, the learning of aggression, and positive attitudes toward violence and sex.

Parents tend to coview less with older children than with younger children. More frequent coviewers tend to use media more heavily, to speak more positively about television content, to consider television a useful tool, and to possess a more control-oriented communication style. Coviewing appears to be uncorrelated with critical discussion and tends to be positive more often than negative. Nevertheless, while insufficient on its own, coviewing can provide the impetus for discussing issues difficult to bring up in another context, and it can cultivate positive family relationships.

From a theoretical point of view, it appears to matter little which medium is under scrutiny. Although less research exists on parental co-use of new technologies, Peter Nikken and Jeroen Jansz have demonstrated that, as with television coviewing, parents and children tend to play video games together when parents believe that the games have socioemotional benefits. Further paralleling the findings of the television-based studies, Nikken and Jansz have found that what they call *conscious coplaying* occurs more often among parents who play more often themselves and who have younger children.

To measure coviewing, scholars most commonly isolate coviewing behavior from motivations and discussion, often using global measures and more recently measuring it across genres for added reliability and precision. Patti Valkenburg and colleagues have employed a construct called *social coviewing*, which

incorporates motivational characteristics, behavioral patterns, and affirmative discussion. Scholars have suggested that future research should examine the implications of children's perceptions versus parents' perceptions, which often differ, continue to investigate the implications of passive and active communication patterns between significant adults and children, and expand studies to explore the ramifications of peer-to-peer coviewing and coplaying.

—Erica Weintraub Austin

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Adult Mediation Strategies; Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Family Communication Patterns Model; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Media Effects

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CUING AND PRIMING

Directors can use many techniques to signal that a specific element of a media story is important. For example, placing a spotlight on an object or having a camera zoom in on the object makes the object more salient so that people are more likely to notice it. *Cuing* the object signals the audience to pay particular attention to this object in the future. Media psychologists would argue that the cue operates to *prime* a particular object or person. *Priming* refers to the effect of some preceding stimulus or event on how we react to some subsequent event or person. The effect is analogous to what happens when a water well is primed. Priming the well enables it to produce water when it is pumped at a later time. As applied to the media, *priming* refers to the effects of the content of the media (e.g., extensive coverage of certain political stories, depictions of violence, the use of brief "teasers" about an upcoming story on a newscast) on people's later behavior or judgments (e.g., evaluations of the president, aggressive behavior, attention to news stories related to the teaser).

There are three important characteristics of priming. First, the effect of a prime dissipates with time. Typically, the effects of a prime on social judgments fade within 20 to 30 minutes (but may last up to an hour). Second, primes that are more intense will tend to have stronger effects on people's judgments and behavior. Third, primes tend to have stronger effects when a situation is more ambiguous. For example, if I have just watched a violent TV show, I am more likely to interpret someone's accidentally bumping into me as intentional and to react with hostility than if I had just watched a nonviolent show such as *Sesame Street.*

Cognitive and social psychologists have used priming paradigms since the early 1970s to study various aspects of the cognitive system. Given the extensive research on priming within social and cognitive psychology, it is not surprising that priming has been found useful as an explanation of a number of the effects of the media on people's thoughts, beliefs,

judgments, and behavior. For several reasons, the characteristics of the media make it a likely source of priming. First, the ubiquitous nature of the media in our lives makes it a powerful tool for priming various concepts—often outside our awareness—that may influence how we interpret later information. In particular, situations in which we have the TV on but are not paying particular attention to it are ideal for priming because explicit awareness of a prime often mitigates the influence of the prime. Second, particular types of media, most notably the news, are well suited to act as primes. A typical newscast will cover a wide variety of topics that may result in the priming of a correspondingly wide variety of concepts. Such priming increases the likelihood that one of the primed items will influence how we interpret later ambiguous information. In addition, any particular story (e.g., the war in Iraq or President Clinton's sexual liaisons) will receive extensive coverage across time, which may result in related concepts (foreign policy or sexual indiscretion) being primed for an extended period of time.

The most prominent area of research dealing with priming among children and adolescents is media violence. In general, the results of the research are consistent with the priming explanation of media violence. When people are exposed to violent behavior on TV or in movies, they are more likely to think about violence, interpret ambiguous behavior in a hostile manner, and act more aggressively. For example, Wendy L. Josephson found that, if boys were primed with aggressive media and then played field hockey, they acted more aggressively (hit other boys with the hockey sticks or pushed other boys over) than did boys who were not exposed to a violent program. Further, consistent with the time-course of priming, the boys were most likely to act aggressively within the first 3 minutes of play. Another interesting aspect of Josephson's study was that the men who were violent in the media clip used walkie-talkies to communicate with each other. Prior to playing field hockey, some of the boys in the study were interviewed using walkie-talkies similar to those used in the media clip. Of interest was whether the walkie-talkies would act as a cue to remind the boys of the clip they had just watched. Consistent with a cuing hypothesis, the boys who were cued with the walkie-talkies acted more aggressively than did boys who were interviewed with a standard microphone.

There is also an extensive literature on the impact of political news as a form of media priming. Priming also has been used to explain the effects of rock music videos on gender stereotyping, the interpretation of ambiguous print advertisements, the impact of news teasers on attention to and memory for news stories, stereotyped judgments of blacks and women, and perceptions of rape.

Research has also demonstrated that stereotyped media portrayals of minorities will prime how individuals make judgments about minorities they encounter in day-to-day settings. Unfortunately, there has been no research focusing on the priming of racial stereotypes in young children or adolescents.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also Aggression, Television and; Ethnicity/Race, Stereotyping; Priming Theory; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Experimental Studies of

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CULTIVATION THEORY

Cultivation theory, developed by George Gerbner and his colleagues, proposes that heavy television viewing contributes to beliefs about the real world. The more

television people watch, the more their beliefs and assumptions about life and society will tend to be congruent with television's most stable and repetitive messages.

The theory of cultivation emphasizes the role that storytelling plays in the process of socialization. Stories—from myths and legends to soap operas and cop shows—tend to express, define, and sustain (i.e., cultivate) a culture's central assumptions, expectations, values, and interpretations of social reality. Much of what we know, or think we know, comes not from personal or direct experience but from many forms and modes of storytelling. In earlier times, cultural stories were told face to face by members of a community, parents, teachers, or the clergy. Today, television is the dominant storyteller. Television's stories must fit into and reflect—and thereby sustain and cultivate—the "facts" of life that most people take for granted.

Cultivation is part of the *cultural indicators paradigm*, which follows a three-pronged research strategy. The first step, *institutional process analysis*, investigates the pressures and constraints under which media messages are selected, produced, and distributed. The second, *message system analysis*, systematically monitors the most stable images and recurrent portrayals in television content. The third, *cultivation analysis,* explores whether and how television viewing contributes to audience members' conceptions of social reality.

Findings from message system analyses of television's content are used to formulate questions about social reality, often contrasting television's "reality" with some other, real-world criterion. Using standard techniques of survey methodology, the questions are posed to samples of children, adolescents, or adults, and the differences (if any) in the beliefs of light, medium, and heavy viewers, other things held constant, are assessed.

LONG-TERM SYSTEMIC EFFECTS

Before cultivation theory was developed in the late 1960s, most studies of media effects looked at whether individual messages or programs could produce some kind of change in audience attitudes or behaviors, typically in an experimental context. These studies looked for immediate effects following exposure to a single message or stimulus. In contrast, cultivation theory sees television as a coherent *system* of messages—a symbolic environment—and asks whether that system as a whole might promote long-term changes rather than immediate change in individuals. Cultivation thus focuses on the cumulative consequences of television exposure, not on short-term responses to or individual interpretations of content.

Early cultivation research was concerned with the issue of violence. Whereas most research on television violence explored whether violent portrayals make viewers more aggressive, Gerbner and his colleagues tested the hypothesis that heavy exposure to television cultivates exaggerated beliefs about the amount of violence in society. Over the years, the investigation expanded to include sex roles, images of aging, political orientations, environmental attitudes, images of science, health, religion, minorities, occupations, and many other topics.

The consistent overrepresentation of well-off white males pervades prime time. Women are outnumbered by men at a rate of three to one and have a narrower range of activities and opportunities. Members of the dominant white male group are more likely to commit violence, whereas old, young, female, and minority characters are more likely to be victims. Crime in prime time is at least 10 times as rampant as in the real world, and an average of five to six acts of overt physical violence per hour involve well over half of all major characters.

Those who watch more television overestimate their chances of being involved in violence and express a heightened sense of danger. This is the *mean world syndrome* of insecurity, apprehension, and mistrust. Above and beyond the effects of background factors, heavy viewers express a greater sense of apprehension and victimization than do light viewers in the same groups, and their images of crime more closely match television portrayals. Children and adolescents are especially susceptible to television's messages about traditional gender roles. Cultivation researchers argue that these messages help maintain the prevailing hierarchy of social power.

Cultivation is not a linear, unidirectional, mechanical "effect" in the sense of a stimulus-response model but part of a continual, dynamic, ongoing process of interaction among messages and contexts. Television viewing usually relates in different ways to different groups' life situations and worldviews. For example, personal interaction with family and peers makes a difference, as do real-world experiences. A wide variety of sociodemographic and individual factors produce sharp variations in cultivation

patterns. The most common of these is a phenomenon called *mainstreaming*, whereby heavy television viewing tends to erode differences in people's perspectives that stem from other factors and influences.

Cultivation has been a highly controversial and provocative approach. Cultivation analysis has been critiqued on theoretical, methodological, and epistemological grounds. Hundreds of cultivation studies have been published in the past three decades, and replications with children and adolescents have been carried out in over a dozen other countries, including Argentina, Australia, China, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, and others. The literature contains numerous failures to support cultivation theory as well as numerous independent confirmations and replications. The most common conclusion, supported by meta-analysis, is that television makes a small but significant contribution to heavy viewers' beliefs about the world.

CONCLUSION

Cultivation theory provides a unique way to think about the enduring and common consequences of growing up and living with television. As media channels and new delivery systems proliferate, and as audiences continue to fragment, cultivation theory will continue to focus on the most general implications of long-term exposure to centrally produced, commercially supported systems of stories. This will be of vital importance as institutional, technological, and policy-related changes continue to unfold.

—Michael Morgan

See also Aggression, Television and; Gender Roles on Television; Mean World Syndrome; Media Effects; Socialization and Media

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CULTURAL IDENTITY

Culture is generally defined as shared and learned behavior and meanings that are socially transferred. Culture incorporates the shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore, and institutions of a people. It embodies our worldviews, perceptions, and orientations, and it shapes our language, our education, our gender roles, and our expectations of youth. Cultural groups share values and traditions. Clifford Geertz suggests that individuals who belong to the same culture go about their daily lives within shared webs of meaning. These shared webs are unconscious and consist of both seen and unseen cultural norms. Among youth, these cultural norms are expressed in the clothes they wear, the music they listen to, the friends they hang out with, their language, and even whether they go to college. But the question of whether cultural identity positions the media or whether the media position cultural identity has yet to be answered.

ETHNIC VERSUS CULTURAL IDENTITY

Although culture often corresponds to nationality or ethnicity, ethnic identity is not the same as cultural identity. Although ethnic identity may be the organizing feature of different nationalities or ethnic groups, Jean S. Phinney's literature review of ethnic identity suggests that understanding how ethnicity distinguishes differing ethnic groups is complex. Whereas youth living within the same nation may have different cultures, youth of different ethnicities may actually share similar cultural values. Many youth of the same ethnicity live vastly different lives shaped by cultural bonds and identification. Youth within a specific racial, ethnic, language, nationality, or religious group are not homogeneous even though they may hold cultural beliefs, practices, and institutions in common. People's primary cultural identification is with the group toward which they most strongly feel a sense of belonging.

CULTURAL IDENTITY IN YOUTH

Shared values are powerful transmitters of culture. Culture determines how youth life is shaped, and cultural identity is the degree to which youth identify with the cultural norms of a specific group. Children identify with groups very early in their development.

They first identify with family, later with friends, then later still with larger groups that use music, clothes, and social behavior to distinguish themselves as a group. Adolescents who grow up experiencing diverse cultures increasingly develop multicultural identities.

Cultural identity is not necessarily a logical and systematically defined term, but it is broader than *ethnic identity*. *Ethnic identity* typically refers to one's membership in a social group that has a common culture marked by shared language, history, geography, and sometimes physical characteristics. Cultural identity with a specific group can include people from many different ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, many different ethnic groups of youth can identify with the same culture, as for example, those youth who belong to the hip-hop generation or Generation X. Cultural identity has not been extensively studied in children and adolescents and, until recently, has rarely appeared in the scientific literature. A few studies have examined cultural identity and its relationship to mental health in youth and show that strong cultural identity is associated with lower levels of adolescent mental health problems. Overall, however, the relationship between cultural identity and general functioning in adolescence is not well understood.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Youth are immersed in the media images of their culture from television to radio to films, and youth culture is depicted in these images. The media are a powerful influence in the development of cultural identity in youth. Through advertising, television, music, print, and the Internet, youth are constantly bombarded with images, ideas, products, and lifestyle choices. Much of the media's influence on youth cultural identity is visible in the way they dress, talk, act, and behave.

Frequently, the essence of a culture is expressed through its proverbs and traditional sayings. For example, the African saying "It takes a village to raise a child" expresses community support for persons outside the nuclear family becoming directly involved with disciplining and directing a child. In the youth culture, the media plays a powerful role in influencing the language of youth culture. Slogans from advertising campaigns are seen on clothes from the youngest to the oldest child, and these slogans become integrated into the everyday language of youth. They become powerful predictors of youth behavior. The media's influence on youth language can also be seen in everyday speech. Words and phrases coined by popular characters on television shows (e.g., the character from the television show *Saturday Night Live* used the term *shwing*) become part of the language of everyday youth culture. Youth identify with these characters and their language, and thus the language symbolizes the attitudes portrayed by the television characters.

Music is another powerful influence on cultural identity. Youth frequently maintain a cultural identity that is ruled by musical genre. It is rare to find youth who cross over from one genre to another. Youth who listen to country music identify with the culture of the country music portrayed in lyrics and lifestyle. Similarly, hip hop, rock, and heavy metal have their own specific cultural nuances with which youth identify.

Visual media influence youth cultural identity through art, print, television, and movies. Young artists identify with an entire youth culture that is based on the work of cartoonists, comic-book artists and writers, and graffiti artists. The artistic medium influences much of youth behavior through its stories and activities. Comic-book heroes have spawned a whole culture of youth dedicated to wearing and acting out the story lines of their specific heroes. Graffiti, a lesser-known but highly visible art form, is a medium created by and for youth for the specific purposes of expressing youth values. The identification of any of these cultures predicts a certain style of dress, a set of behaviors, and most probably the pursuit of a specific lifestyle.

Advertisements are responsible for creating or helping particular youth cultures flourish. Very little research has been conducted to determine which comes first, the media image or the cultural norm. Cultural values and attitudes are manifestations of cultural identity, and these values and attitudes affect how the specific form of media is interpreted and used. The youth culture has specific beliefs about health, life, love, traditions, and customs, and advertising uses these cultural norms to be effective.

Is cultural identity in youth shaped by these media images, or do they shape the images according to their cultural norms? Andrea Zlatar suggests that media are the most powerful conveyors of messages to adolescents because they become instruments of cultural policy—shaping, governing, and strengthening cultural identity through an omnipresent system of communication.

—Jeannette L. Johnson

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children of; Media Education, Political Socialization and; Media Effects; Media Genre Preferences

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DAYTIME TALK SHOWS

The daytime television talk show reached the apex of its popularity in the mid-1990s, with more than two dozen options available daily. Public criticism of such shows reached its peak at that time, too, focusing on the often bizarre participants, the emphasis on sexual deviance, and the frequent use of "ambush" techniques to startle guests and audience. In 2005, a dozen staples remained, ranging from the much-decorated *Oprah Winfrey Show* (about 10 million viewers) to the much-maligned *Jerry Springer Show* (about 3 million).

The quantitative literature on television talk shows is limited to a few studies of content and its effects, and these largely date to the genre's period of peak popularity. One primary project, funded by the Kaiser Family Foundation, generated a 1995 video sample of 10 episodes from 12 top-rated shows and a nonredundant sample of 10 transcripts from 8 of these shows, as well as a study of nearly 1,000 talk show titles.

Analysis of the video sample by Bradley S. Greenberg and colleagues (1997) identified the guests as 2 to 1 female; 46% were in their 20s, and 75% were Caucasian. The major groups of discussion topics on the shows were family issues (parenting, marriage, dating), sex issues (activity, infidelity, orientation) and crime (criminal acts, abuse, addiction). The specific topics represented on at least 10% of the talk show sample were parent-child themes (48%), dating (36%), marital relations (35%), sexual activity (34%), reconciliation (25%), physical health (24%), abuse (23%), alienation (23%), appearance (23%), criminal acts (22%), sexual infidelity (18%), addiction (12%), mental health (11%), and sexual orientation (11%). The major variant in topic choice was gender: Male guests were more likely to deal with sexual orientation, whereas females more often discussed psychological topics, such as addiction, alienation, and mental health.

The transcript analysis profiled personal disclosure and privacy issues on daytime talk shows. Self-disclosure accounted for 42%, with disclosure by the host (28%) and others with a personal relationship to the guest (30%) accounting for more than half. Overall, the average number of disclosures per talk show hour was 15, with a predominance of sexual activity disclosures (3.5 per hour), primarily frequency, pregnancy, and infidelity; abuse (2.7 per hour); criminal activity (2 per hour); and an array of personal attributes (4 per hour), primarily addiction and mental and physical health issues. Televised self-disclosures received negative reactions from the host and the relational partner in 30% of those instances. However, for ambush disclosures, the ambushed guest responded with some form of face-saving strategy 85% of the time.

The amount of "expert opinion" in talk shows was assessed by *talk turns*, or the number of times a particular person initiates a conversation. Experts accounted for 3% of all speaking turns, as compared with nonexpert guests (53%) and the host (39%).

In a 1999 study of 955 talk show titles, Sandi Smith and colleagues reported that 30% of all titles reflected family relationships, 27% personal relationships, and 74% individual attributes of the guests. Among guest attributes, sexual activity accounted for 20%, personality traits for 19%, and criminal activity for 10%. All

these were further coded as to whether the title reflected positive, neutral, or negative attributes; negative emphases were consistently identified. Sexual activity disclosures occurred more so with personal relationships than with family relationships. Sexual orientation disclosures and embarrassing situation disclosures occurred more with positive personal relationships. Abuse disclosures were most likely to be found with negative personal relationships. No more recent systematic analysis of talk show content has been identified.

Patricia J. Priest, in her notable 1995 interview of 40 talk show participants, reported that they had four major motivations: to remedy stereotypes, to seek 15 minutes of fame, to plead their cases against those who had victimized them, or to market a business venture. She characterized these guests primarily as outliers who were members of marginalized groups at the fringe of society.

The concern with talk show content has not manifested itself in much research that attempts to determine its social and behavioral effects. One study indicates that the audience that favors this personal disclosure format itself has relatively high self-disclosure scores. The primary motives of undergraduates in watching these talk shows have been identified as to be entertained ("It amuses me"), to pass the time ("Nothing better to do"), and to relax. The females in the study watched the shows 3.2 hours per week; the males, 2 hours per week.

Cynthia M. Frisby compared the responses of high- and low-self-esteem subjects to taped instances of upward and downward social comparisons among 232 talk show viewers. Both esteem levels in response to both social comparisons showed increases in life satisfaction measures, with the high-self-esteem group obtaining even more positive benefits from the downward social comparison exposure.

Stacy Davis and Marie-Louise Mares interviewed 282 high school students and asked them to estimate how many people do the kinds of things commonly seen or discussed on talk shows, for example, premarital sex, infidelity, teenage pregnancy. They also assessed desensitization (how wrong the perpetrator was and how much the victim suffered) and the seriousness and complexity of issues common and rare on TV talk shows. Comparisons were made among subgroups differing in the amount of talk show viewing they did. The primary finding was a significant effect of viewing on the estimates of behaviors discussed on these shows, but only on teen-related topics. In addition, viewing was related to the perceived seriousness of the problem of teenage pregnancy.

Hyung-Jin Woo and Joseph R. Dominick examined international college students who viewed different amounts of TV talk shows, and then compared their perceptions with those of a comparable group of U.S. students. Within their own group, the international students who were the heaviest viewers of TV talk shows overestimated the frequency of undesirable behaviors in the United States and had more negative attitudes toward and more negative perceptions of human relationships in this country. When compared with domestic viewers, the international students demonstrated a consistently stronger correlation between their viewing and each of these same outcome measures.

—Bradley S. Greenberg

See also Gender Roles on Television; Media Exposure; Talk Shows, Children and Adolescents; Television, International Viewing Patterns and; Television, Moral Messages on; Television, Motivations for Viewing of

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DEPRESSION, MEDIA USE AND

Depression is a mental disorder marked by feelings of sadness, loss of interest, and hopelessness. According to the World Health Organization, it is one of the most common mental illnesses, and if it becomes chronic, it can affect an individual's daily functioning. Adolescence is a time of emotional upheaval, during which individuals are particularly vulnerable to depression. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that mental health problems affect one in five children and adolescents. They further estimate that 10% to 15% of all children and adolescents have some symptoms of depression. Signs of depression in adolescence include boredom, hopelessness, unexplained crying, reckless behavior, and loss of interest in usual activities. Although it is common, depression is an especially significant problem in adolescence because of its association with teen suicide. The adolescent suicide rate has increased in recent years. Statistics reveal that almost 5,000 U.S. adolescents committed suicide in 1995. Studies estimate that between 5% and 8% of U.S. youth attempt suicide. It is now the third most common cause of death for adolescents, following unintentional injuries and homicide.

The mass media play a role in adolescent depression and suicide. First, mass media content can affect adolescents' beliefs about mental illness. Second, media use can be a symptom of or a treatment for mental illness. Third, media use can be a cause of depression. Fourth, media representations of suicide can have a contagion effect, leading to suicide.

MEDIA CONTENT AND BELIEFS AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Children and adolescents consume a good deal of media. Research suggests that younger adolescents are especially susceptible to its influences, especially in areas in which they have little direct experience. The topic of mental illness is often taboo in private conversation, yet it is a common topic in drama and on talk television. Indeed, research concludes that the mass media are a prime source of information about mental illness. Unfortunately, media depictions of mental illness are often inaccurate and negative. Content analyses of prime-time U.S. television found that the mentally ill are characterized as "bad," violent, and negatively affecting society. These negative media images can lead depressed adolescents to be reluctant to seek treatment and can contribute further to their feelings of worthlessness.

MEDIA USE AS SYMPTOM OR TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION

Although there is little evidence that media use causes depression, excessive media use is more likely a symptom of depression. Depression is often associated with changes in sleep routines. Heavy television viewing, especially late at night, can be a way for a depressed young person to fill lonely hours. Research has shown that adolescents with fewer social skills are more likely to use the Internet excessively and to access problematic content. Listening to heavy metal music, with its themes of violence and hopelessness, has been found to be a mark of troubled youth. Heavy metal listeners are more likely to report feelings of depression and thoughts of suicide. Some have speculated that troubled youth are drawn to media content that supports their depressed view of reality.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that people can use the media to try to reduce dysphoric feelings. The theory of affect-dependent stimulus arrangement described by Zillmann and Bryant (1985) asserts that people are motivated to manipulate their environments to maximize pleasure and reduce aversive feelings. There is evidence that depression leads older adolescents to television viewing as a way to cope with negative moods. Depressed college undergraduates watch more television than their nondepressed peers. And, although researchers did not find a clear connection between depression and television viewing, they did find that depressed college undergraduates

watched television to overcome loneliness and to get away from people. Still another study found that older adolescents who were in bad moods listened to more lively, joyful music than their peers in better moods. In all, these studies support the hypothesis that media use can be a way to cope with negative moods.

MEDIA USE AS A CAUSE OF DEPRESSION

Concerns that depressing media content is the cause of negative moods has been an enduring concern of media researchers since the days of radio serial research. Although some writers assert that excessive media use—including heavy television viewing, Internet use, and heavy metal music—leads to depression in youth, there is little evidence that media use itself causes depression. Research about the causes of depression has focused on the impact of news and media violence. Scholars and public health officials were concerned that news coverage of the 1986 explosion of the space shuttle Challenger would lead to depression among children, especially as children had been encouraged to watch the launch and study about space because Christa McAuliffe, a teacher, was one of the astronauts. Others were concerned that coverage of the cold war arms race would lead adolescents to feel hopeless about the future.

Most research, however, has focused on the impact of media violence on feelings of depression. Scholars have found that exposure to violent media content leads children and adolescents to become fearful of the real world and cultivates distrust of others. Other research has found that, just as exposure to real violence can lead to traumatic stress and depression, so can exposure to media violence.

CONTAGION EFFECTS

Worries about contagion effects of publicized suicides have existed since the 18th century. Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* which portrayed the suicide of its lovelorn hero, reportedly led to copycat suicides and subsequent banning of the novel. The suicide contagion effect is called the *Werther effect*, after that hero. Cluster suicides do occur, and scholars estimate that they are two to four times more likely among 15-to-19-year-olds. Mental health practitioners believe that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to contagion effects because they romanticize death and believe that suicide is a way to punish someone, to express love, or to be reunited with someone who has died. In general, suicidal adolescents do not understand the permanence of their actions.

There are concerns that fictional media content can stimulate contagion effects. Suicide, including attempts and gestures, are a regular fictional theme. Scholars often comment that, in most cases, the stories do not include discussions of suicide's permanence or its emotional effects on the survivors. In fact, research conducted outside the United States has found contagion effects of fictional suicides.

Most concern focuses on the coverage of suicide in the news. Media coverage of the suicides of entertainers or politicians is typically associated with an increase in suicides. In fact, there is evidence that, as coverage increases, so does the number of copycat suicides. Consistent with professionals' beliefs that adolescents are more vulnerable to contagion effects, there are reports that these effects are strongest for teens.

Recognizing the impact that the media can have on adolescent suicide, media scholars have developed recommendations for reporting on suicide (Gould, Jamieson, & Romer, 2003). These recommendations include (a) report on underlying and longer-term contributions to suicide, such as mental illness and substance abuse; (b) avoid reporting the overly emotional reactions of family members so that adolescents do not view suicide as a way to gain attention; (c) use restraint in including the word *suicide* in headlines; (d) cover celebrity suicides especially carefully; reports should take care to prevent celebrity and glamour from overshadowing reports on the underlying causes of the suicide.

—Elizabeth M. Perse

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Mood Management Theory; Music Listening, Impact of; Television, Motivations for Viewing of

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DESENSITIZATION EFFECTS

Desensitization is a process through which repeated exposure, without incident, to a stimulus that naturally evokes a powerful emotional response leads to a lessening of that response. That is, if a subject is repeatedly exposed to a stimulus, and if no negative outcome arises from the exposure, the subject's reaction to the exposure will eventually be lessened. The desensitization principle can be applied in a variety of ways, from helping arachnophobes overcome their fear of spiders to training soldiers to circumvent their natural aversion to killing.

An unintended and allegedly undesirable example of desensitization occurs when repeated exposure to violent media content causes audiences, especially children, to become desensitized or "numbed" to the notion of violence. Many people, including what appears to be the majority of social science researchers, assert that the desensitization effect is undesirable in this context because it can be associated with an increased likelihood that viewers of media violence will be more tolerant or accepting of real-life violence. There is also the belief that desensitized subjects may exhibit more violent attitudes or even more violent behavior than before the desensitization, although there is less agreement on this purported effect.

Researchers generally agree that the desensitization effect is real. There is also widespread consensus that children are more susceptible to the effect than adults. The classic study of desensitization in children, which has been repeated several times, shows that children who are shown violent media wait longer to respond when staged incidents of violence occur in their presence. Children who have not been the subjects of experimental desensitization treatments consistently respond more quickly and more profoundly when they witness violence.

However, being apathetic to violence and committing violence are two different things, and there is less agreement as to whether the desensitization effect causes violent behavior in children or anyone else. Critics fault experimental methods as artificial and invalid as predictors of real-life reactions. They also argue that other factors may explain what seems to be a case of cause and effect. For instance, people who enjoy violence or aggression, or who have higher tendencies to be violent or aggressive, may seek out violent media more than other people do. Therefore, it may not be the media or the desensitization effect that causes violent behavior, but rather the proclivity for violence that causes some to seek out violent media in greater proportion.

Causation is also the most difficult element to establish in pursuing support for various media effects theories. There is strong and widespread support for the notion that desensitization definitely occurs from the consumption of violent media. Somewhat more tenuous is the assertion that this desensitization causes children to be more violent. Some groups, however, including the American Psychiatric Association, do not hesitate to make that claim, asserting that desensitization does indeed lead directly to increases in violent behavior.

—Marc C. Seamon

See also Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory; Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to

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DESIGNATED DRIVER ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

In the United States, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes during 2003; this figure represented 40% of all traffic-related

deaths. One approach to reducing instances of impaired driving is to promote the use of a *designated driver*, defined as an individual who agrees to remain sober, for example during a party, and thus is able to drive others home safely.

William DeJong and Jay Winsten, exploring mass media approaches in communicating about substance use prevention to American youth, cite the Harvard Alcohol Project as a case in point. The project's key objectives include encouraging the use of designated drivers and shifting social norms about the acceptability of driving after drinking alcohol, yet simultaneously conveying that designated driver programs should not be equated with excessive drinking consumption among passengers. Winsten points to national public opinion polls to assert that the project has had a marked impact on awareness, acceptance, and usage of the designated driver concept.

The results of many mass media programs have been limited, however, reflecting that a clearly defined target market is not always apparent, and many ad campaigns utilize donated (rather than paid) media, thus ads commonly have less desirable placements and reduced production quality. John Lastovicka and colleagues have proposed a lifestyle typology to determine appropriate segments for media efforts, with young males who are "Good Timers" (i.e., heavy partiers with a macho and sensation-seeking orientation) identified as a high-priority target. Furthermore, when assessing the effectiveness of various ad campaigns, a study by Lisa Szykman and colleagues suggests that consumers process anti-drinking-and-driving messages differently depending on the ad's sponsor. A designated driver ad from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is thought to be more credible than a corresponding message from Budweiser because a nonprofit organization is seen to have positive, society-serving motives, whereas a for-profit sponsor infers more negative, self-serving (ulterior) motives that might lead consumers to question the reasons for sponsorship and discount the content of the message. Kevin Boots and Richard Midford found that an Australian designated driver intervention for young adults known as "Pick-a-Skipper" was effective in reducing drinking and driving.

Health behavior models have specified the conditions under which individuals are likely to engage in desired health behaviors. Protection motivation theory, for example, suggests that people will respond to a health threat in the desired direction only if they perceive a severe threat, see themselves as vulnerable, and perceive themselves and the preventative behavior to be efficacious. These theories place emphasis on cognitive processes mediating behavioral change; however, they often ignore the context in which health decisions are made (e.g., sober versus impaired decision making). Additionally, some messaging may actually work counter to the stated goals of advocacy groups. According to reactance theory, whenever we perceive an unfair threat to our freedom of action, we experience a state of reactance—heightened motivation to perform the threatened behavior. Consequently, if adolescents perceive a given communication as an attempt to restrict their freedom (e.g., "Don't drink and drive—it's the law"), the influence attempt may actually increase motivation to perform the very action that it was designed to prevent.

—Timothy Dewhirst and Lisa Cavanaugh

See also Alcohol Advertising, International; Media Effects; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Television, Prosocial Content and

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DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES, MEDIA AND

Public debate about the potential consequences of children's exposure to mass media has been a frequent theme of social discourse ever since the advent of motion pictures. Does media exposure disrupt children's sleep? Does it foster poor academic performance? Does it inspire aggressive, if not delinquent, behavior? With the introduction of each subsequent new media technology, questions such as these have been common and recurrent. In response, investigators have assembled a tremendous and diverse volume of literature illustrating that the impact of mass media on children is conditional and selective, depending on characteristics of the media message, the child, and the environment. This entry examines some aspects of child and adolescent cognitive and psychological development that are particularly important for understanding the effects of the mass media in the lives of young people.

EARLY RESEARCH ON CHILDREN AND MOTION PICTURES

In the 1920s, motion pictures thrust themselves into the lives of virtually everyone in America. Going to the movies was fun, inexpensive recreation and a frequent event for virtually every family. This national obsession with the new medium, however, sparked considerable concern over what the movies were doing to children.

In an attempt to determine the effect of motion pictures on children of different ages, the Motion Picture Research Council initiated a series of investigations. These studies, conducted between 1929 and 1932 and funded by the Payne Fund, provide fascinating insights into how developmental differences can mediate reactions to media messages. The investigations of three research teams are of particular relevance for our deliberations.

To examine the acquisition and retention of factual information presented in films, Holaday and Stoddard worked with more than 3,000 children and adults and 17 different motion pictures. Their work revealed that even 8-year-old children acquired a substantial number of ideas from films (about 60% of that acquired by adults). Indeed, the retention of information by all age groups was surprisingly high, leading the investigators to conclude that movies provide a "special learning format" yielding an unusually high retention of factual material compared to the acquisition of facts in standard memory tasks.

Dysinger and Ruckmick studied affective reactions to films. Using neurophysiological changes as indices of emotional arousal, they worked with several age categories of children and some adults (for comparison purposes). They found that scenes of danger, conflict, and tragedy produced the greatest effects on children of all ages. Romantic and erotic scenes, on the other hand, didn't seem to do much for very young children, but they were very arousing for 16-year-olds. Adults, by comparison, showed little emotional arousal to any of the scenes. The authors concluded that adults had learned to discount the films as fantasy, but children experienced substantial emotional arousal.

Finally, in a series of two dozen experiments involving thousands of children in grades 6 to 12, Peterson and Thurstone found that the attitudes of children were definitely influenced by some films. These effects tended to be greater for younger children, and seeing two or three pictures treating the same topic in the same way achieved greater results than seeing a single film. Furthermore, their findings showed that attitude changes resulting from exposure to motion pictures persisted for long periods of time.

The discoveries illuminated by these researches, all of which were conducted with *silent* films, provided the foundation of our understanding of developmental differences in media effects. In fact, it is these three areas of inquiry—acquisition of information from media, affective reactions to media, and responses to persuasive media—that remain the primary focus of contemporary research. This entry focuses on developmental differences in acquisition of information from media and in response to persuasive media.

ACQUISITION OF INFORMATION

Building on the classic work of cognitive psychologists such as Piaget and Bandura, Valkenburg identified four cognitive-developmental stages that children

pass through in their development as media consumers. This model, which projects children as active explorers of their media environment, provides a valuable framework for understanding contemporary research on developmental differences in mass media effects.

In stage 1, during the first 2 years of life, infants and toddlers primarily notice bright, colorful, moving images. Although they tend to be cognitively and physically active while using the media, they primarily react to salient and vivid auditory and visual stimuli. There is little evidence that children comprehend media content prior to 24 months of age.

Enjoying their budding cognitive capacities, preschoolers (2 to 5 years old) begin to evidence comprehension and enjoyment of some media content. Initially, their skills are rudimentary, however, as they have not yet assembled a foundation of prior knowledge and experiences. Consequently, preschoolers tend to prefer media content that offers a slow pace and lots of repetition. During this stage, several developmental milestones are evident. Preschoolers begin to actively express preferences for media content, and the ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality slowly emerges. But at the same time, preschoolers tend to comprehend television very literally, constructing their perceptions of TV characters on single, physical attributes without integrating them into an overall picture.

The clear demonstration of greater media competence is evident by the third stage (5 to 8 years old). Children in this stage display a preference for faster-paced, more complex entertainment and often seek themes of action, adventure, and violence projected within storylines that incorporate a community of peers and friends. With the tendency to interpret media content literally on the decline, and the ability to distinguish fantasy and reality in transition, early elementary school children can recognize that costumed characters, unrealistic stunts, and special effects on television are unreal; but they still consider as real things that look real on television.

In the last stage, later elementary school children (9 to 12 years old) make the transition to more adult styles of media comprehension and begin to exhibit critical and abstract thinking when consuming media content. Specifically, they begin to exhibit attributes characteristic of adolescents, including a more social orientation—evidenced by increased sensitivity to the thoughts, opinions, and emotions of others, the ability to understand the difference between fantasy and reality, and a preference for entertainment content designed for adults.

As children mature into adolescence, they continue to extend their cognitive and psychological development and to expand the foundation of prior knowledge and experiences from which they will comprehend and interpret media content. It is important, however, to recognize that, even at this stage, young people remain vulnerable. Contemporary research highlights the fact that the medium through which information is conveyed—whether it is print, audio, visual, or a combination of these—can itself affect how children acquire information and represent it in memory. In general, audiovisual presentations, such as those offered by television and film, continue even today to be a "special learning environment" for adolescents. Perhaps because television and film images can look more "real" than real life, or perhaps because they often demand little investment of mental effort to acquire, adolescents easily can be misled or confused by imagery projected by these media.

This point is illustrated clearly by research examining the effects of distorting forms of humor in educational television programs. Specifically, fourth- and eighth-grade children were shown an educational television program that contained (a) distortion-free humor, (b) exaggeration, (c) irony, and (d) ironic humor followed by a correction of the humorous distortion. Compared with distortion-free humor, irony resulted in the misperception of properties of novel objects introduced in the program. Correction after irony largely failed to remove the perceptual distortion. Exaggeration tended to produce overestimation of object properties. Counter to initial expectations, susceptibility to perceptual distortions from humor did not diminish with age, suggesting that the negative impact on information acquisition occasioned by the involvement of such humor reaches farther up the developmental scale than had been previously thought.

RESPONSES TO PERSUASIVE MEDIA

Many of the most prevalent concerns about children, adolescents, and the media center on potential responses to persuasive messages, especially advertising. It is recognized, for example, that young children (stage 1) cannot discriminate between program and commercial content, do not understand the selling intent of commercials, and have no comprehension of the economics of mass media. However, even at a very

early age, children can identify commercials, perhaps because many of the most salient and vivid images on television are commercials, and they start asking for products.

Preschool children (stage 2), as would be expected, also exhibit little comprehension of the selling intent of advertising—they do not understand that commercials are meant to sell products. Instead, their comprehension and interpretation of advertising is typically very literal. Preschool children, consequently, are very vulnerable to persuasive appeals.

As children grow older (stage 3), they display greater understanding of the selling intentions of advertising. For example, although most early elementary school children express suspicion about the truth (or lack thereof) of commercials, only about a third of 5-to-7-year-olds understand the selling purpose of ads. By age 11, the suspicions about commercials reported by almost all children are based on an understanding of the advertisers' motivation to sell products.

Another concern about children's responses to persuasive media involves the comprehension of advertising disclaimers. Disclaimer statements such as "batteries not included" are intended to qualify or explicate persuasive appeals. However, disclaimers typically incorporate adult nomenclature displayed briefly in very small text or rapidly spoken—presentation styles that are difficult, if not impossible, for most children *and* adults to understand. Especially for younger children, when the imagery conveyed by a commercial and the conditions for product use detailed in a disclaimer are not synchronized (e.g., when performance expectations of a toy are not realized during play), behavioral consequences as well as enduring and lasting emotional consequences may result.

INTERACTIVE MEDIA

A clear pattern of research findings is not yet available that illustrates if or how we should alter our expectations of interactive media, such as video games and computer games, within the four cognitive-developmental stages outlined previously. Some evidence suggests that children utilize interactive media in a manner consistent with their developmental stages. Early elementary school children (stage 3) are less likely, for example, to use the Internet for communicative functions (e.g., chatting, email, etc.) than are stage 4 children. Overall, however, our understanding of the intellectual, emotional, and social consequences of interactive media emerges primarily as speculation.

—James B. Weaver, III, and Stephanie Lee Sargent

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Persuasive Intent of; Fear Reactions; Horror Films; Infants and Toddlers, Developmental Needs of; Infants and Toddlers, Media Exposure of; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and; Preschoolers, Media Impact on Developmental Needs of; School-Age Children, Impact of the Media on (see *Media Effects, Family Interactions and*)

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DIGITAL DIVIDE

Computer-based media and the digitalization of information in general are of great importance for the future. Political, cultural, and economic participation,

jobs, and success in the markets are expected to be dependent on digital media. Thus, to have a chance for good jobs and good lives in the information society, children need media access, adequate media and computer literacy, and the ability to deal with media of the future. Government, administrative units, and other individuals and institutions who have studied the diffusion of media in society have identified a *digital divide* between those who have access to and experience with the digital media (the "haves") and those who lack such access and experience (the "have-nots"). This digital divide is a frontier that can exist both within a culture or nation and between different cultures and nations; for example, the greatest number of people using the Internet and the best infrastructure for digital media are in the northern half of the world, because these technologies are expensive. Empirically, in each nation a great number of people who are already disadvantaged in other ways also are located on the "wrong" side of the respective digital divide, including the elderly, women, the poor, those with little formal education, and members of certain ethnic groups. Thus, the concept of digital divide is a key factor in relations between different cultures and nations, and it is important as a starting point for a discussion of the consequences of the digital media for democracy, culture, and society.

THE THEORETICAL BASE OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The digital divide has been the subject of a considerable amount of empirical research, which has given rise to three basic theories: the theory of diffusion of innovations, the knowledge gap theory, and the theory of media literacy.

The Theory of Diffusion of Innovations

A starting point for understanding the concept of the digital divide can be seen in the theory of diffusion of innovations. This theory describes how innovations with measurable, fixed advantages for those who use them—ranging from new medicines to new media—diffuse in a population. At the beginning, only specific people (called innovators) use an innovation, but then more and more people see its advantage and become users themselves. This process of diffusion ends when all the people are convinced of this advantage and use the innovation. At this point, it is said that the process of diffusion is *saturated.* Thus, an empirically measured digital divide between the haves and have-nots of a population may exist only temporarily, while the diffusion process goes on. Or it may be a stable divide—saturation has taken place, but not everyone uses computers and the Internet. A variety of strategies may be needed to influence the diffusion process, as, for example, when governments want to hasten the spread of computer access and literacy.

The Knowledge Gap Theory

The second theoretical approach of importance to the concept of a digital divide is the so-called knowledge gap theory. This approach emerged in the context of the campaign analysis. Empirical studies showed that the availability of information in the mass media may enlarge a gap between those who know and those who do not know about the goals of the campaign, because people of higher socioeconomic status get information more quickly than those of lower socioeconomic status. Thus, for example, relevant background information reaches less educated people and those who usually get their information from television more slowly than it reaches those with more education and those who read newspapers. This phenomenon is referred to as the *knowledge gap*, and by analogy the term now is applied to the differences in access to and use of personal computers and the Internet. However, the mechanisms behind those two "gaps" are different—the original knowledge gap referred to information distributed through a variety of media, whereas the digital divide is concerned only with access to and use of computers and the Internet.

Media Literacy

Third, the concept of *media literacy* is of importance for the digital divide concept. As noted earlier, the theory of diffusion of innovations starts with the assumption that it makes sense for a person to use an innovation because of its advantage. If a person nevertheless does not use it and does not want to do so, he or she is not behaving in a rational way, according to media literacy theory. Perhaps there are traditions that prevent him or her from using it, or maybe it is too expensive. In the case of the digital divide, it is usually assumed that nonusers lack media knowledge. To overcome this digital divide, media literacy is taught in schools, in public libraries, and also in other institutions for adult learners, such as community and senior centers.

On the basis of these three theories, much empirical research has been done on the digital divide and its development. These studies mostly measure whether people have access to a computer, to the Internet, or to neither. Only a minority of researchers operate with more complex concepts and try to define the digital divide in terms of the purposes for which people use PCs or the Internet.

DISCUSSION

Although the digital divide between the haves and have-nots demands the attention of government and civil society, the theoretical analysis and empirical research on this divide raise additional issues. First, mere access to a PC or the Internet is not the only factor important for adequate life chances in the upcoming information society—a boy who has access but is just playing computer games all day is probably not well prepared for a good job in the future. Second, the claim of the theory of diffusion of innovations—that an innovation must have a clear and fixed advantage for those who use it—is problematic. Media are not merely technical inventions but also communication potentials that may be used by people in very different ways. Thus, the possibilities offered by the computer or the Internet vary over time and are not fixed. Third, media cannot be understood independently of culture, and so the diffusion theory, which claims to be valid in every culture, is not adequate for the problem. Fourth, the concept of media literacy has ideological implications and must be analyzed in more detail. No one can tell us today what a child must learn to have a good chance in the upcoming information society, but it is clear that mere use of a PC and familiarity with Microsoft products are not enough.

—Friedrich Krotz

See also Digital Literacy; Media Literacy

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DIGITAL LITERACY

As large-scale studies of Internet use in the United States make clear, young people's Internet use is on the rise. Adolescents, in particular, are turning to the Internet for a wide range of reading and writing purposes. Having conducted an extensive study of Internet use among 9-to-19-year-olds in the United Kingdom, Sonia Livingstone and Magdelina Bober found that young people prefer to use the Internet for communication rather than for information. Yet, as scholars of literacy technologies have pointed out, the technological focus in schools has been geared toward the information component of digital technologies rather than the communication component. This incongruity suggests that, to better understand young people's literacy practices in digital spheres, researchers need to focus attention on the user (reader and writer) of digital texts. In recent studies of digital literacy practices among adolescents, this focus has produced findings related to why many young people choose to read and write online for hours every day and what these online reading and writing practices can tell us about the changing nature of literacy.

When users engage in digital literacy, the distance between the text and the user is minimized. A prominent feature of online reading and writing is interactivity, with reader, writer, and text merging in a fast-paced exchange of words in print—words to be encoded, decoded, interpreted, invented, revised, inflected, and so on, moment to moment. Add to this drama the incorporation of graphical elements, such as photo and video-streaming, emoticons, color, and font variations, and we can begin to imagine the active involvement of the user.

Several recent studies of adolescents' Internet communication have found that, to be a proficient communicator on the Internet, one must "perform" a version of oneself, shifting voices moment by moment for many audiences at once. For writers in digital environments, discerning expectations and social codes can be complicated. To manage the task, users must draw on the intertextual chains that exist through the textual history of each exchange and the larger social and textual network on- and offline. Several studies report that adolescents make conscious linguistic choices in order to perform identities online. Studies of adolescents' uses of text messaging found that users presented themselves differently as they shifted from window to window, taking on different roles almost simultaneously. The enactment of these multiple identities calls into question what it means to have an authentic or personal voice as a writer. Envisioning voice as "authentic" privileges stability across texts rather than the dynamic, fluid concept of voice exhibited by digital writers as they enact identities that depend upon a running analysis of complicated online and offline contexts.

Adolescents have been found to demonstrate numerous literacy skills as they engage in online writing. For instance, they are acutely aware of the various audiences they address, adapting their subject matter and writing styles accordingly, and they critically analyze online texts in terms of the rhetorical context within which the texts are framed. More studies of online reading and writing will help us understand the literacy practices of young people, both in terms of how online reading and writing foster traditional literacy skills and in terms of how online reading and writing create a new set of practices and skills that are changing the face of literacy for the future.

—Cynthia Lewis

See also Digital Divide; Media Literacy

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DISNEY

From its origins in the 1920s as a cartoon network, the Walt Disney Company has become one of the five biggest media groups of the world, with products ranging from movies, television shows, and other media programming to a global network of theme parks and a variety of consumer products. In 2004, the company's revenues were a record $30.752 billion. Disney's activities are concentrated in the fields of family entertainment and sports. The company tries to use every possible distribution channel to reach consumers. A main reason for the company's success is its enormous marketing power; nearly all content can be presented through a wide variety of communication channels. Another important reason is the power of the Disney brand, which is well known to families in America, Europe, and Asia as a sign of family entertainment. As a result of the ongoing process of media concentration, the company has the power to present a nearly complete media menu for families.

The most important stockholders are members of the Disney family (who own less than 5%), Sid Richardson Bass, Lee Marshall Bass, Perry Richardson Bass (together about 4%), Berkshire Hathaway, Capital Group, Inc., and members of the Disney management.

HISTORY

The history of this enterprise began in 1923, when 21-year-old Walter (Walt) Disney and his brother Roy founded the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio in a back room in Hollywood. In 1926, the enterprise changed its name to Walt Disney Studios. In 1928, the first Mickey Mouse cartoon, *Steamboat Willie*, came to the cinema. Since then, Mickey Mouse has been inseparable from the Disney name. The company has a plethora of figures in the movies and on TV, but Mickey is Disney's most important character as well as the most important landmark in the development of the media merchandising and licensing business.

In the company's first decades, a number of other characters helped drive its economic development. Many were found in movies based on fairy tales, such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Pinocchio*, and *Bambi*. When Disneyland, the company's first amusement park, opened in California in 1955, its main attractions were the numerous and by-then-famous film heroes. The combination of an amusement park with characters and shows for children was quite innovative. Since the 1950s, the national television network ABC has brought the show *Disneyland* to children across the United States. The *Mickey Mouse Club* portion of the program was Disney's first foray into television programming that utilized the Disney brand. In the show's 4-year run, more than 360 episodes were made. The show then returned twice to the screen, first in 1977 for 2 years as a less-successful syndication show, and then in 1989 as *MMC* on the Disney Channel. After a 7-year run, the show ended in 1996. Popular former Mouseketeers from this last period are Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears. In the following years, the Disney brand was built up to become one of the most popular brands in family entertainment worldwide. It was used for nearly every one of the company's products.

The Disney enterprise grew continuously in the 1960s and 1970s but was active almost exclusively in the United States. During this period, Disney Studios produced a number of popular, successful movies. In the 1980s, however, Disney began to suffer; there were no notable new film successes, and Disney stock dropped. In particular, the new trend of computer-animated movies cost Disney its leading position in family entertainment. The company was revived, however, as new investors and new management initiated renovation and restructuring, which brought the enterprise to its present size. New partnerships were made with Pixar and Miramax. The success of Pixar's movies especially helped reinstall Disney as the leader in family entertainment.

The most spectacular takeover in this expansion process was the acquisition of the Capital Cities/ABC Group in 1997. This step cost $19 billion and gave Disney control of a huge number of television broadcasting stations. In 2001, the group acquired the Fox Family Network for $5.3 billion and, along with it, a number of family programs and children's programs previously owned by media moguls Rupert Murdoch and Chaim Saban.

With these acquisitions, the enterprise further secured its already-comfortable market position in the area of children's and family television. Today, this new part of the Disney empire is called JETIX.

Disney was somewhat less successful in its initial online endeavors. The bundle of online activities that were originally a part of the company's Go.com enterprise were restructured after 2000 and are now handled independently. Still, Disney is becoming more and more successful in the online arena, for example, with the online game *Toontown.com* in the United States, Japan, and Great Britain. It is also increasingly involved in the computer and video game market.

THE COMPANY TODAY

In 2005, Michael Eisner stepped down as CEO of Disney, with Robert Iger taking his place. The reason for this change was disagreement between Eisner and the owners, especially members of the Disney family, about the future of the company. In his last years as CEO, Eisner broke off the successful joint ventures with Pixar and Miramax. Disney has subsequently attempted to reestablish cooperation with the two companies and at this writing is in the process of buying Pixar for $4.7 billion.

Today, the enterprise is divided into four areas: Parks and Resorts, Studio Entertainment, Consumer Products, and Media Networks.

Parks and Resorts

Parks and Resorts was established as its own division in 1952 with the birth of Disneyland. Today, there are 11 entertainment parks on 3 continents; the newest park was begun in 2005 in Hong Kong. Besides the

theme parks, a cruise line, various restaurants, sports sites, and a hockey team are part of this division. The segment's revenues were $7.75 billion in 2004, and the operating income was $1.12 billion.

Studio Entertainment

All activities that deal with the production, distribution, and evaluation of films fall into the Studio Entertainment Division. The studios are Walt Disney Feature Animation, DisneyToon Studios, Hollywood Pictures, and Dimension Film. For the films produced in cooperation with Pixar and Miramax, Disney took charge of marketing and distribution. National and international distribution of Disney films is carried out by the Buena Vista Group. In addition, Buena Vista Home Entertainment and Buena Vista Home Entertainment International distribute Disney movies on video and DVD to home entertainment markets worldwide. However, the Buena Vista group does not work exclusively for Disney. In addition to Disney's motion picture endeavors, four music labels belong to the Studio Entertainment Division. Disney movie soundtracks are published by the Buena Vista Music Group. Disney also counts as part of its empire one of the biggest producers of Broadway musicals, Buena Vista Theatrical Productions. *The Lion King* is one of this group's biggest successes. The revenues of the Studio Entertainment Group in 2004 were $8.71 billion, and its operating income was $662 million.

Consumer Products

Under the umbrella of the Disney brand are a plethora of products, including toys, electronic games, books, electronics, food, and beverages. Disney is the largest licensor in the world. The company licenses the Walt Disney name and characters from movies and TV shows to manufacturers, retailers, show promoters, and publishers throughout the world. Disney has also sold the Disney Stores to The Children's Place (TCP), which uses the brand with a license.

Disney is the world's most important international publisher for children; comics with Disney-licensed characters such Mickey Mouse are sold nearly worldwide. Also under the Disney brand are products such as the electronic games made by Buena Vista Games. Publishing houses such as Hyperion Books and Disney Press are part of this segment of the company, as are direct marketing activities. Its revenues in 2004 were $2.51 billion, and its operating income was $534 million.

Media Networks

This is the most important part of the Disney empire. In this segment, we find activities in cable, television, radio, and the Internet. ABC Entertainment, ABC Daytime, ABC News, ABC Kids, and the production company Touchstone Television form the ABC Television Network. Recently, ABC has been very successful with programs such as *Lost* and *Desperate Housewives*. *Desperate Housewives* was produced by Touchstone Television, which has been successful throughout its 20-year history with series such as *Scrubs*, *8 Simple Rules,* and *Monk*. As a part of ABC, ABC Sports presents events such NBA basketball, tennis, figure skating, football, and motor sports. The flagship program of ABC News, *World News Tonight*, is one of the most important news shows in the United States. *ABC Kids* is also a popular show; it airs on Saturday mornings and combines content from the Disney Channel with programming from JETIX and Toon Disney.

ABC Television is the owner of 10 television stations in important markets in the United States. In addition to ABC's television activities, ABC Radio owns 71 radio stations around the country.

Disney is also active in cable TV; its cable networks include ABC Family, the Disney Channel, Toon Disney, SOAPnet, and ESPN. ABC Family can be seen in 88 million homes and is ad supported. The Disney Channel is also a success; it is available in more than 85 million households in the United States, and there are now 22 Disney Channels worldwide. Another channel for young people is Toon Disney, which has an integrated programming block from JETIX. It is available in more than 47 million homes. The channel SOAPnet is the only channel in the United States that specializes in soaps. Many of the viewers in the nearly 40 million homes that receive the channel are women between the ages of 18 and 49.

The second big segment of cable activities is ESPN. Under the name ESPN are more than 50 business entities that specialize in sports entertainment. The ESPN empire is immense and includes the ESPN cable channel (which can be seen in more than

90 million homes), magazines, radio stations, a wide variety of specialized channels, international activities in 12 languages, and 30 separate networks. ESPN is clearly a global titan in the sports entertainment market.

Besides these TV activities, the Media Networks division includes program producers such as Walt Disney Television Animation and JETIX. Buena Vista Television and Buena Vista Television International distribute the programs in U.S. and international markets. The Disney Internet Group, which operates most of Disney's online business, is also part of this segment.

The revenues of Media Networks in 2004 were $11.78 billion, including $6.41 billion from the cable networks and $5.37 billion from broadcasting. The cable activities were especially lucrative; the operating income in broadcasting was only $245 million, whereas in cable it was $1.92 billion.

THE FUTURE OF DISNEY

In the future, Disney plans to expand outside of America, especially in Eastern Europe and Asia. The new theme park in Hong Kong is a step into the Chinese market—a very attractive one for Disney. However, problems stem from the company's American roots. In 2004, $24.01 billion of its revenues came from the United States, $4.72 billion from Europe, $1.55 billion from Asia, and $472 million from the rest of the world. The big question is whether the content of a conservative, traditional, American company will be accepted in the new markets. There were difficulties in establishing the theme park Euro Disney in France, yet the Disney park in Japan was a big success.

Another driver of ongoing growth should be the engagement of the company in new markets, such as interactive entertainment, the Internet, and the production and distribution of digital television; ESPN already sends parts of its content in HDTV.

—Hardy Dreier

See also Licensing, Merchandising and

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DISPLACEMENT EFFECT

Archimedes' principle (circa 240 BC) states that "an object immersed in a fluid experiences a buoyant force that is equal in magnitude to the force of gravity on the displaced fluid." In other words, when a person enters a full bathtub, water is displaced onto the floor. This *displacement effect* does not apply only in physics, however. It is also a well-known principle of media effects on children and adolescents. Time spent with media potentially *displaces* other, more active pursuits, such as reading, playing outside, talking with friends, or engaging in sports.

Are there data to support the existence of a displacement effect for media use? Good data exist that document the extent of media use among young people, and additional data show that media use could well have an impact on other activities. A Kaiser Family Foundation report examined the media habits of 2,032 3rd-through-12th-graders nationwide. On average, the children and teens spent nearly 6 ½ hours a day with a variety of media, with TV predominating at all ages. The amount of time spent reading books, however, was a mere 23 minutes a day. Time spent with media dwarfed all other activities, including hanging out with friends (2:16), physical activity (1:25) and homework (0:50). Young people who had TV sets in their own bedrooms were more likely to watch more TV per day (3:31 vs. 2:04) and less likely to read (0:38 vs. 0:54). However, the Kaiser researchers find no difference in physical activity between frequent and light viewers of TV or between those who spent the most time with media and those who spent the least. Indeed, although the association between TV viewing and obesity is becoming well established in the communications and pediatrics research, the possible association between TV viewing and physical activity remains less clear.

This study of older children contrasts with a study of very young children: 1,000 children, ages 6 months to 6 years, conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2003. In that study, children 6 years and under were found to spend about 2 hours a day with media, which was about the same amount of time they spent playing outside but three times as much as they spent reading or being read to. However, in that study, 4-to-6-year-olds who were heavy TV viewers were shown to spend less time playing outside or reading than their peers who viewed less TV.

Clearly, if older children and teens are spending more than 6 hours a day with media, other activities have to be curtailed. Hence, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended in 1999 that *all* screen time be limited to no more than 2 hours per day for young people and that children under the age of 2 should not be routinely allowed to watch TV.

—Victor C. Strasburger

See also Computer Use, Rates of; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Television, Child Variables and Use of

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DIVIDED ATTENTION, PARALLEL PROCESSING AND

Divided attention (also known as *dual attention*) refers to a person's ability to split his or her attention between one or more different things simultaneously, such as cooking and watching TV. *Parallel processing* involves a person's ability to process information coming from different sources simultaneously. If a child looks at the clock while watching TV in order to answer a parent's question about how long until the show is over, the child is parallel processing the show on TV, the request for information, and the calculation of how long until show is over. Media scholars are interested in divided attention and parallel processing to better understand how children and adults process media messages. In addition, much of this research is concerned with designing better educational programming for children.

When a child watches television, he or she has a lot to do. First, several things may be occurring on the screen. For example, when a child watches *Sesame Street*, the Count von Count character may be counting bats while the number 7 appears on the screen and a news flash scrolls across the bottom of the screen. The child may focus on the Count, the bats being counted, the number 7, or the words scrolling across the screen. The child is also listening to the sound track for the show, which may include the Count's counting, the bats squeaking, and music. Further, the child must integrate the visual and auditory components of the television story into a coherent understanding of what is occurring on screen. In addition, there may be myriad things for the child to pay attention to in the larger environment, such as toys in the room, siblings who are running around, and parents yelling from the next room. Likewise, there are tactile sensations, such as the hardness or softness of the chair the child is sitting on, and there may be odors, such as the smell of cookies baking.

Clearly, the child cannot pay attention to all these various items in the environment. To how many things can a person attend at the same time? Theories of cognition address this question by examining the capacity of the cognitive system. The perceptual and cognitive systems are not capable of processing all the various stimuli in the environment, and introspection tells us that we are good at narrowing our attention to specific items. Most models of cognition posit the existence of working memory. *Working memory* is one's active processing of information relevant to what one is thinking about (e.g., the Count, the bats being counted, the number 7, and the smell of cookies baking in the next room). Some of the processing may be conscious, but much of the activity in working memory is unconscious. Most important, working memory is limited in what it can do at any point in time; there is only so much that a person can think about at a given point.

Because of the limitations of working memory, children must learn to attend to relevant things in their environment and to ignore other things that are not relevant to what they are doing. Of course, children

also learn to divide their attention. For example, the child may be primarily focusing on the Count and the bats that are being counted. But the child may also be aware of the baking cookies, so his or her attention may be divided between these two tasks—understanding what is going on on the screen and determining when the cookies will be ready to eat.

Media researchers study the ability of children to divide their attention in order to better understand how much of the capacity of working memory is occupied by a particular task. Typically, media researchers use a *secondary task* to study the capacity of working memory. That is, a child may have a primary task, such as watching the Count count bats; but the child also has a secondary task, such as counting backward by 1 or 3 or noticing whenever a light flashes on top of the TV. The child's performance on these secondary tasks (how well the child counts backward or how long it takes the child to indicate that the light flashed) is used to measure how well the child can divide attention between the primary task and the secondary task. When a child performs less well on the secondary task, researchers infer that the primary task requires more capacity of the working memory. A demanding primary task leaves less capacity with which the child can perform the secondary task. For this reason, the child's performance on the secondary task is poorer when the primary task is a demanding one than when the primary task is less demanding.

It is important to understand how much of the capacity of working memory is used by a particular task to determine whether people can adequately process the information in the environment. For example, if an educational program required more working memory capacity to process it than young children have, then the show would not help children learn, because their working memories would be overwhelmed. Knowing this information, the producer of the program could simplify the segment or present the information more slowly to enable the children to process the necessary information in working memory. In addition, by studying the capacity of working memory, researchers understand better how to improve the efficiency of working memory so that children can process more information.

Many factors influence the capacity of working memory. For example, the more children know about a particular topic, the more efficiently they can process information in working memory. Children who are just learning to count must dedicate more of the capacity of working memory to counting along with the Count than must children who learned to count several years ago. The better children understand the narrative structure of a story or the formal features of TV (such as cuts, edits, zooms, and so forth), the more efficiently they can process information presented in the media.

Research has demonstrated that people can become more efficient in how they perform tasks in working memory. For example, when a child first learns to read, working memory can be taxed just trying to figure out how to sound out a word and then figuring out what the word means. However, as the child reads more and more, it becomes easier to identify the word on the page. With enough practice, word recognition becomes so automatic that it takes no effort at all to see the word on a page. The process of reading has changed from a controlled process that is effortful and takes capacity in working memory to an automatic process that uses none of the capacity of working memory. *Parallel processing* occurs when a task has become so automatic that people can process that task and other tasks at the same time. For example, when a child is first learning to count, counting along with the Count may take up most or all of working memory capacity. With practice, the counting will become automatic such that the child can count along with the Count and in parallel determine when the cookies coming out of the oven will be cool enough to eat.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Cognitive Development, Media and; Formal Features; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and; Television, Attention and

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DRUG USE, DEPICTIONS OF

Illicit drug use in adolescence is associated with myriad adverse outcomes, including delinquency, depression, and violence. By the time adolescents finish high school, 51% of them report having tried an illicit drug. Findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicate that 40% of students used marijuana at least once during their lifetimes, 12% used inhalants, 11% used ecstasy, and 9% used cocaine. Trend data from the Monitoring the Future Survey suggest a gradual decline over the past decade in most categories of drug use except inhalants and OxyContin, a highly addictive narcotic. Content analyses provide detailed accounts of what adolescents see and hear about illicit drugs in popular media, but the consequences of exposure to such messages are not well understood.

Although much is known about the portrayal of tobacco and alcohol in popular media, fewer content analyses have examined depictions of other drug use in movies or on television. Illicit drugs appeared in 22% of the 200 most popular movie rentals from 1996 and 1997—in 20% of R-rated and 17% of PG-13 movies. Of the 43 movies in which illicit drugs appeared, 26% contained explicit, graphic portrayals of drug preparation or use. Marijuana was found most frequently (in 51% of the 43 movies), followed by powdered cocaine (in 33% of the 43 movies). At least one major character used illicit drugs in 69% of the scenes of that portrayed drug use. Few movies portrayed the negative consequences of drug use or emphasized its illegal nature; only 28% of the 43 movies in which illicit drugs appeared associated these substances with crime or violence.

A study of 87 top-grossing movies of all time observed marijuana use in 8% and noninjected drug use in 7% of the movies. Drug use in these movies was typically portrayed by adult characters who were not in main roles. No illicit drugs appeared in any of the 81 G-rated movies released between 1937 and 2000, although three movies showed characters consuming a food, pill, or potion that transformed them, and two movies showed a syringe being used.

Television is often identified as adolescents' primary source of information about illicit drugs, but little is known about how entertainment television depicts drug use. A study by Peter Christenson and his colleagues concluded that prime-time television more often talks about than shows illicit drugs: They were mentioned in 21% and seen in 4% of the situation comedies and serial dramas most popular with adolescents. Half of the episodes that contained drug references included humorous statements about drug use, such as jokes about smoking marijuana or attending drug rehab. Almost as many episodes included at least one negative statement about drug use, such as warning characters to avoid drug use or information about its harmful effects. Most episodes that depicted drug use also portrayed at least one negative consequence, such as a dangerous health outcome, arrest, or losing a coveted job.

Another study observed that illicit drug use was less prevalent on prime-time television than in real life: incidence rates were 1.5% among main characters, 0.8% among all characters combined, and 6.1% among the U.S. population. Compared to drug users in the U.S. population, however, drug users on TV were more likely to be minority than white.

Most evidence about the relationship between illicit drug use and media exposure focuses on adolescent preferences for different types of popular music. The perception that some music subcultures promote drug use dates back at least as far the association of jazz and cocaine in the 1920s. A study of the frequency and nature of drug references in popular music analyzed 1,000 songs from five genres: alternative rock, country and Western, Hot-100, heavy metal, and rap. Illicit drugs were mentioned in 18% of the songs but much more often in rap lyrics (63%) than in the lyrics from other categories. A companion study of 258 music videos from three popular cable channels found that illicit drugs were mentioned in 20% and seen in 3% of the videos. Mainstream and modern rock videos were more likely to show illicit drug use than were rap and hip hop videos or other genres. In samples of both music lyrics and music videos, marijuana was the substance mentioned most frequently, followed by powder and crack cocaine.

Correlational studies confirm disproportionately higher rates of self-reported drug use among fans of heavy metal and rave music but not among fans of rap music. Subcultural music preferences predicted all illegal drug use patterns reported by a sample of more than 10,000 Norwegian 14-to-17-year-olds. Students who liked Seattle grunge rock were almost twice as likely to report using marijuana and amphetamines as other students. Liking house techno music was associated with a two- to threefold increase in the odds of

using ecstasy (MDMA) only, and using ecstasy and amphetamines. Adolescents who had never used illegal drugs reported significantly less interest in all kinds of music studied (house/techno, Seattle/grunge, acid jazz, and new age).

Longitudinal research is needed to permit causal inferences about media effects on adolescent drug use and to provide a closer examination of characteristics that may explain why adolescents who favor particular types of music are also more likely to use illicit drugs. Keith Roe coined the term *media delinquency* to refer to adolescents' affinity for what he calls "disvalued" media and other forms of delinquency, including illicit drug use. Other researchers emphasize the role of sensation seeking, a preference for exciting experiences and stimuli. It would be helpful to examine the individual differences that predict which adolescents "see" and "hear" references to illicit drugs in entertainment media. In addition, research is needed to understand how adolescents interpret such portrayals and the consequences for their attitudes and behaviors regarding drug use.

—Lisa Henriksen

See also Cigarette Use, Music Videos and; Cigarette Use in Television and Movies; Movies, Substance Use in; Music Listening, Problem Behavior and

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DRUG USE, PREVENTION OF

See ANTI-DRUG MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

E

EATING DISORDERS

Over the past few decades, the prevalence of eating disorders has steadily risen among adolescent girls. Although there are several causes of eating disorders, many point to the media's constant portrayal of the ultra-thin female body as normal, attainable, and ideal as one of the greatest contributors. These media models weigh 23% less than the average woman and fit the established weight criteria for anorexia, making their body types unrealistic and unhealthy. Ample research suggests a relationship between media exposure and eating disorders; however, many have theorized that this relationship holds only if girls internalize the thin-body ideal and compare themselves to thin media models. This entry discusses internalization, comparison, and the direct relationship between media and eating disorder relationships.

Of the 1% to 10% of the population suffering from anorexia and bulimia, 85% to 95% are female, usually aged 15 to 19. Anorexia ranks third in chronic illnesses among adolescent females. Furthermore, many adolescent girls have disordered eating patterns, meaning they use unhealthy weight control methods but do not have a full-blown eating disorder. For example, one study found that 11% of teen girls vomited, 8% used diet pills, and 7% used laxatives to lose weight. Compared to females, the 1 million males suffering from eating disorders, mostly binge eating, is relatively small but on the rise. Studies of adolescents, media, and eating disorders concentrate on females almost exclusively. Males are studied in the context of developing body dysmorphic disorders rather than eating disorders.

INTERNALIZATION OF THE ULTRA-THIN BODY

Adolescents have a high degree of exposure to media, with 80% reading magazines for at least 4 hours a week and the average girl watching 3 to 4 hours of television every day. These media promote the ultra-thin body ideal as desirable and attainable by using primarily ultra-thin models and female TV characters, printing abundant dieting articles and ads, and printing fitness articles that focus on weight loss or attractiveness.

Adolescents internalize these messages about thinness. Some studies have found that adolescent girls describe their ideal body types as similar to media models—tall and extremely thin—and rate borderline anorexic bodies as extremely attractive. Others have found that media exposure explained one third of the variation in high school girls' belief in the ultra-thin ideal and that frequent readers of fashion magazines were twice as likely to have dieted and three times as likely to have exercised to lose weight. Moreover, the degree to which girls internalize the thin ideal has been associated with eating disorders.

SOCIAL COMPARISON AND INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

Research also suggests that comparison with media models links media exposure to disordered eating. This association occurs when adolescents want to look like media models and compare themselves with models, and several studies support this assertion. Studies have found that older adolescents with eating disorders were significantly more influenced by

media and more likely to compare their bodies with media models and celebrities than those without eating disorders. Female adolescents without eating disorders tended to compare themselves with friends more often than with portrayals in media. Other studies of adolescents have found that attempts to emulate media personalities predicted bulimic behaviors, which might explain why many anorexics and bulimics have said that fashion models motivated and guided their desire to be thin.

DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIA AND EATING DISORDERS

Many studies have found direct relationships between eating disorders and media exposure. These studies fall into three categories: exposure to print media, exposure to TV, and both TV and print media exposure.

The evidence suggests that print media are related to eating disorders. For example, Michael Levine and colleagues found that magazine ads and articles influenced middle school girls' ideal body shapes and their motivation to attain those ideals, and the influence of these magazines was highly associated with disordered eating, explaining 35% of the differences among the girls' disordered eating scores.

Comparisons of different magazine genres have shown that reading beauty and fashion magazines as well as fitness magazines is related to eating disorders, but one study found that reading fitness magazines was the best predictor of eating disorders even after taking into account interest in fitness and dieting topics. As for reading sports magazines, the more adolescents read sports magazines, the less likely they are to have bulimic symptoms; however, no relationship between sports magazines and anorexia has been shown.

Kristen Harrison conducted studies with preadolescents and adolescents and found that their TV viewing predicted eating disorders. Moreover, a 1995 study by Anne Becker found that, prior to television's introduction to Fiji in 1995, Fijians endorsed a plump body ideal. However, 38 months after television was introduced in Fiji, 74% of the girls reported feeling "too big or fat," 15% vomited to control their weight, and eating disorders suddenly increased.

Finally, some studies have looked at TV and print media exposure together. Eric Stice and colleagues found a direct relationship between media exposure and eating disorders, and media exposure explained 43.5% of the eating disorder symptom differences among adolescent females. Other studies have found that magazine reading predicts eating disorders, whereas TV viewing does not. Moreover, girls who have more eating disorder symptoms tend to increase their fashion magazine reading but decrease their television viewing.

SHIELDING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS FROM HARM

Although a large amount of research indicates a link between media exposure and eating disorders, many still debate how much influence the media actually have, given the number of people exposed to media and the number that actually develop an eating disorder. Most agree, at the very least, that the media contribute to the thinness obsession and tell us that thinness is beautiful and good.

To overcome or at least diminish media's potential influence, health experts suggest teaching children to be critical of media images—for example, talking to children about how computers are used to make models appear thin and erase skin rolls, and how sometimes computers are used to combine body parts from different models to create the "perfect" model.

—J. Robyn Goodman

See also Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Eating Habits, Media Influence on

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EATING HABITS, MEDIA INFLUENCE ON

The eating habits of children today are quite different from the consumption patterns of their peers of past generations. Baby boomers experienced "new" foods such as frozen meals, sugar-laden snacks, and food options containing large amounts of preservatives. Generation X-ers were often challenged to "fend for themselves" by making their own meals because their parents were at work. Obesity figures for the current youth generation are bleak. The American Academy of Pediatrics estimates that one in every four children under the age of 12 is considered overweight or obese—an astonishing increase of 50% in the past 30 years. Critics cite a combination of poor eating habits, lack of exercise, and lifestyle (including media use) that has exacerbated the situation. Labeling today's children as "Generation Extra Large," Lisa Tartamella, Elaine Herscher, and Chris Woolston noted that this rapidly growing epidemic continues to spread among our nation's children.

EATING HABITS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 5-to-11-year-olds account for roughly 27 million of the nation's population. American youth are becoming consumers at younger ages. Estimates show that children in this group will directly spend or influence parents to spend approximately $5.8 billion on food and beverages in 2005, which is almost 30% of the total expenditures for these items. Children's eating patterns have changed significantly over the past two decades as well. Children are now eating more often; they are more often eating away from the home; and they are consuming more fast food. Most children do not eat according to federal dietary guidelines.

Changes in the American family structure play a key role in food consumption, with more mothers joining the workforce and children and teens gaining more power in the household decision-making process. Other notable influences include peer influence, ethnicity, the overall school environment, and commercialism starting at a very early age. Children often have poor consumer decision-making skills, which can contribute to early formation of seriously unhealthy nutritional patterns. Results of a 1998 *USA Weekend* Roper Report show that 78% of youth influence where the family goes for fast food, 55% choose the restaurant for dinner, and 31% determine specific brands that families purchase. Parents cite two overwhelming barriers to preparing a healthy family meal: (1) different food preferences of family members and (2) children's desire to eat advertised foods. The Center for Science in the Public Interest has argued that growing health problems such as unhealthy diets and childhood obesity can be linked to the advertising of high-fat, high-sugar food products targeting children.

MEDIA INFLUENCE

Research has shown that media influence is a strong predictor of children's food consumption, and Kristen Harrison and Amy L. Marske noted that sweets, snack foods, convenience foods, and fast foods totally dominate the ads children see. Food advertisements and children's use of television, movies, video games, and the Internet as entertainment outlets for hours each day have been blamed for poor nutrition and heavier children in today's society. The ever-expanding world of media gives marketers even more opportunities to target youth.

Children are inundated with food marketing on a daily basis, and major food retailers often target them via highly specialized advertising. In the overall American economy, U.S. food products accounted for $7.3 billion in advertising expenditures at the turn of the 21st century. as a comparative yardstick, the U.S. Department of Agriculture spends roughly $333 million per year on nutritional education, whereas the total U.S. advertising industry expenditure for confectionary and snacks alone is approximately $1 billion. By targeting youth from an early age, food companies are able to build positive, long-lasting brand relationships and create brand loyalty among children, teens, and parents.

Despite a plethora of new media options, television remains the medium most widely used to reach children. Today's child views approximately 60,000 commercials a year. Content analyses show that food

is the most frequently advertised product category on children's television. The majority of food advertisements feature products high in sugar (such as cereal, candy, and snack foods), and in recent years an upswing in the frequency of fast-food commercials has been documented. Children seem to choose food based on exposure, and greater television use is associated with higher intake of energy, fat, sweet and salty snacks, and carbonated beverages, and with lower consumptions of fruit and vegetables.

Recent trends in marketing food to young people focus on merging entertainment and advertising. Children's magazines often feature puzzles or games in advertisements. Product placements in video games, television shows, and movies are increasingly common. Associating toys and apparel with food brands or spokescharacters increases children's awareness of products. Corporate websites allow children to play games, color pictures, and register to win free promotional items, many times after the child first provides contact information for database and direct marketing purposes. Schools are filled with food marketing, from textbooks sponsored by companies to fast-food outlets in cafeterias to unhealthy food ads on Channel One. The media possibilities geared toward reaching children today are almost endless.

THE FUTURE

Most scholars agree that media influence the eating habits of children. They also cite the complexities of other cultural factors, such as parental communication and sedentary lifestyles, as important factors in the obesity epidemic. Food is used for much more than essential body energy. Some parents and teachers bribe children with food, sometimes using candy and sodas as rewards for good behavior. Parents impose excessively stringent and unhealthy weight loss programs on their children, often increasing the chances of children perceiving themselves as "needing" to diet.

A recent Institute of Medicine report suggested several important steps in correcting media's influence on childhood food consumption. Possible areas for improvement included decreasing food advertisements targeting children, especially children 8 years and younger who do not have the cognitive skills necessary to recognize persuasive intent; increasing mass media educational efforts; and promoting physical activity through public relations campaigns. Parents can also help children develop strong consumer decision-making skills from an early age to help counteract food marketers' influence on purchase.

—Courtney Carpenter and Jennings Bryant

See also Food Advertising, Eating Disorders and; Food Advertising, Obesity and

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E-COMMERCE

E-commerce, defined as economic transactions (and related activities) conducted using networked communications technologies such as the Internet, has transformed the global economic landscape. E-commerce primarily consists of four different categories: business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C), consumer-to-consumer (C2C), and consumer-to-business (C2B). Although attention has long focused on the first two categories, technological advancements coupled with entrepreneurial spirit have seen C2C make headway in recent years, as witnessed by the popularity—and profitability—of ventures such as eBay. Although the early years of e-commerce was characterized by the dot-com craze, the subsequent dot-com bust has shown that the success of an e-venture is probably contingent on innovativeness augmented by a sound business model and tempered by caution. Regardless of the sobering

lessons from the early years, e-commerce is here to stay, as evidenced by both the number of online users who indulge in commercial transactions as well as the sheer volume of financial activity. Several surveys indicate that more than 100 million Web users shop online, with total e-commerce transactions expected to reach $316 billion in 2010, according to a report from Forrester Research available at www.shop.org, an online association for retailers.

Given the number of teenagers and young adults who have assimilated the Internet into their everyday lives, it is not surprising that marketers and advertisers have identified this group as an influential segment in dictating their marketing decisions. Some survey data from Harris Interactive suggests that online spending by members of Generation Y (8 to 21 years old) ranges in the billions of dollars, and online spending among 18-to-24-year-olds is four times as much as online spending by adults (see shop.org). Other reports suggest that teens and young adults' online spending was expected to touch the $5 billion mark in 2005, and that their online research influenced more than $20 billion in offline spending. Indeed, by 2008 the typical teenager is expected to spend approximately $400 in online purchases annually. Teenagers are reported to be especially influential in purchasing decisions pertaining to consumer electronics and music.

Several e-retailers have realized the importance of the youth market and have attempted to identify specific themes that most appeal to this segment. Industry experts deem several factors to be critical to tapping the youth market. Suggestions range from developing separate websites for young and adult audiences—as already practiced by such outlets as Macy's and Pottery Barn—as well as marketing to these audiences in venues that are most likely to draw them (e.g., social networking sites such as facebook.com). In addition, young audiences are generally known to respond favorably to the deployment of multimedia-enriched features on sites. Finally, both industry-driven beliefs and empirical evidence from academic research indicate that offering customized or personalized products and services—offerings that are delivered based on an individual's unique likes and desires—may well be the next frontier in e-commerce. In terms of barriers to e-commerce among youth, invasion of privacy and lack of access to credit cards may be some of the most important impediments that marketers have to deal with. Nevertheless, with technology advancing at a rapid pace and with a sizable proportion of youngsters spending a substantial amount of time online, this segment will continue to exert a major influence on the continuing evolution of e-commerce.

—Sriram Kalyanaraman and Abe Crystal

See also Advertising, Exposure to; Advertising, Persuasive Intent of; Human-Computer Interaction (HCI); Multimedia Toys; Sticky Marketing; Websites, Children's

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EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION, EFFECTS OF

Television programs have the potential to educate children in important ways. Carefully designed educational programs can positively influence a child's readiness for school by teaching basic letter and number recognition or more advanced vocabulary and math skills. Television can introduce children to places, cultures, and people that they otherwise may have little or no opportunity to learn about in their everyday lives. In contrast, critics suggest that watching TV contributes to less creativity, shorter attention spans, and increased apathy toward school. This entry defines educational programming and examines the effects of viewing this content.

DEFINITIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Children's educational television programming has been defined generally as programming that is planned around developmental or educational goals. More specifically, educational programs have been designed to teach the academic skills taught in school (e.g., vocabulary, math, science, and geography) or to teach prosocial behaviors (e.g., altruism, self-control, and positive social interactions). Educational programming can also incorporate a broad and varied range of topics, including physical well-being (motor skills and health-related knowledge), social and emotional development (intrapersonal and interpersonal skills), approaches to learning (developing a positive attitude about learning), language skills, cognitive skills (problem solving, reasoning), and knowledge of social and natural sciences.

Policymakers have also provided broad definitions of educational content. In response to the Children's Television Act (CTA) of 1990, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defined educational programming as "any television programming that furthers the educational and informational needs of children 16 years of age and under in any respect, including the child's intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs" (FCC, 1996). This definition resulted in broadcasters airing programs of questionable educational value. For instance, *The Jetsons* was listed as educational because it taught children about life in the future. Thus, in their attempt to meet the requirements of the CTA of 1990, broadcasters clearly missed the mark. In a subsequent policy known as the three-hour rule, explicit guidelines clarified the frequency and definition of educational television programming for children. The policy mandates that all broadcast stations must air a minimum of three hours of educational children's programming each week for expedited license renewal. Amy Jordan's recent assessment of the three-hour rule indicates that broadcast stations are adhering to this FCC mandate, yet they do not seem to publicize their educational offerings for children.

COGNITIVE PROCESSING OF TV: ATTENTION AND COMPREHENSION

The prerequisites for learning or internalizing the academic or prosocial content presented on television are attention to and comprehension of the educational message. David Bickham, John Wright, and Aletha Huston provide a comprehensive review of the topics of attention and comprehension, specifically highlighting the active and passive models of television viewing. The *passive model* proposes that children's attention and processing are governed by the glitz of the production features or formal features. For instance, perceptually salient features (e.g., rapid movement, lively music, special visual effects, unusual cartoon voices) will attract young children's attention. In contrast, the *active model* proposes that, instead of just capturing children's attention, the formal features help them make their own attentional decisions and viewing choices. Formal features signal whether a program is appropriate for and interesting to them, and children will pay attention to content whenever formal cues indicate that attention is needed. Although perceptually salient features may attract initial attention, comprehensibility determines sustained attention to the program. Therefore, knowledge of the meanings behind formal features is a critical element in developing media literacy or critical viewing skills; moreover, these critical viewing skills need to be developed in order to use television to its full potential.

LEARNING FROM EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

Academic research on the effects of children's television has focused on total time spent viewing TV as well as time spent viewing specific categories or genres of programming. *Sesame Street*, in particular, has set a standard of excellence for those working in children's educational television. It was the first children's educational program to integrate curriculum into production. The use of Muppets and production techniques from advertising and cartoons created a learning environment that was engaging and fun, as if to "disguise" the educational message.

Sesame Street Research

The Sesame Workshop (which was called the Children's Television Workshop when established in 1968) has embraced both formative and summative research. *Formative research* is conducted to pilot-test new program segments with groups of children from the target audience. These types of studies are usually concerned with children's attention to, understanding of, or interest in new content areas. Furthermore,

formative research can also be used to test new instructional methods or new production techniques. Findings from formative research have resulted in important changes to education programming. For instance, Rodney Dennis explored ways of getting children to actively participate in a game designed to teach them to sort or classify objects. “Sorting” means identifying one of several objects as “not like the others” on some characteristic (e.g., three socks and a shoe). Dennis found that adding a brief pause (1 to 2 seconds) after asking the question increased the likelihood that children would point to one of the objects on the screen. This work also revealed that adding narrative to encourage children to “go ahead and point now” further increased their active participation in the game. These methods designed to facilitate participatory learning are used in many *Sesame Street* bits, as well as in newly developed children’s programming such as *Blue’s Clues* and *Dora the Explorer*.

The Children’s Television Workshop also recognized that assessing the effects of their programming was critical to achieving their goals. They were trying to communicate with an audience of children under the age of 6 who were economically disadvantaged. Specifically, they wanted to use television to teach 4- and 5-year-old children from low-income families the school readiness skills that are related to early success in school. *Summative evaluations* to assess the final product or outcome of *Sesame Street* were conducted in the early 1970s. These evaluations found that regular viewers of the program demonstrated gains in learning letters and numbers as well as other cognitive skills.

Later assessments of *Sesame Street* demonstrated positive influences on children’s development. The Early Window Project, conducted by John Wright and colleagues beginning in 1990, was a 3-year longitudinal study of low- to moderate-income children’s media use and its relationship to the subsequent development of their academic skills, school readiness, and school adjustment. This study of more than 250 families demonstrated that viewing *Sesame Street* at ages 2 and 3 predicted higher scores at age 5 on measures of language, math, and school readiness (e.g., recognizing shapes, colors, and letters). The effects of viewing were independent of parents’ education, income, primary language spoken in the home (English or Spanish), and the overall quality of the home environment as measured by the Caldwell and Bradley Home Observation Measure of the Environment (commonly abbreviated H.O.M.E.).

Longitudinal research also demonstrates that viewing educational content at an early age contributes to positive academic outcomes much later in life. In the Recontact Study, Daniel Anderson and colleagues investigated the long-term relationship between preschool children’s television viewing and their achievement, behavior, and attitudes in adolescence. The researchers interviewed adolescents at ages 15 to 19, many years after they had participated in similar investigations as preschoolers. Adolescents who had been frequent viewers of *Sesame Street* at age 5 had better grades in high school, read more books for pleasure, had higher levels of achievement motivation, and expressed less aggressive attitudes then did adolescents who had rarely viewed the program at age 5.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND INITIATIVES

Summative evaluations of other educational television programs have revealed positive effects in multiple domains. Children who watch programs containing prosocial messages may be learning lessons about tolerance, cooperation, or sharing, to name a few possibilities. For instance, research indicated that children learned task persistence, tolerance of delays, rule obedience, and positive values from *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,* and learned about friendship and tolerance from *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*. Evaluations of *Barney and Friends* suggested that toddlers who viewed Barney showed increases in imaginative play, demonstrated less aggressive behavior, and showed increases in persistence and cooperation, compared to control groups.

Sandra Calvert’s work illustrated that viewers retain information presented in segments of *Schoolhouse Rock* over extended periods of time. Her findings suggested that singing is better for learning information verbatim, whereas spoken information may facilitate a deeper level of processing. Research on *Reading Rainbow* demonstrated that the program has been successful at stimulating children’s interest in reading and their interest in particular books (demonstrated especially by going to the library to check out a book that has just been previewed on the program).

An ongoing concern is the number of children who are unequipped with basic skills when they enter school. Because television is such a pervasive influence, researchers and public policymakers have called upon television to help improve school readiness skills in

preschoolers. Consequently, PBS initiated a *Ready to Learn* series to address the school readiness needs of young children, as well as implementation of an outreach service designed to meet the needs of parents and other caregivers. Programs in this lineup have included *Barney and Friends, Arthur, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, Sesame Street, Clifford, Teletubbies*, *Postcards from Buster*, and *Between the Lions.* PBS is committed to getting children ready to begin school by offering high-quality programming based on specific educational goals.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The substantial body of research on cognitive processing and comprehension of children's educational television programming indicates that there are several key ingredients to effective design, only a few of which have been discussed here. Perceptually salient features and comprehensible language are keys to attracting and maintaining the attention of young viewers. Teaching content during periods of development when children are "ready to learn" those concepts is illustrated within popular preschool programming such as *Sesame Street*. Repetition of concepts (presenting the same concept over and over or presenting the same concept in many different ways) allows for rehearsal and facilitates memory. Finally, children are active learners. Educational programs that offer children the opportunity to interact with the program and subsequently master concepts contributes to learning from television.

—Ronda M. Scantlin

See also Educational Television, History of; Television, Attention and

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EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION, HISTORY OF

Educational and informational programming—defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1996 as "any television programming that furthers the educational and informational needs of children 16 years of age and under in any respect, including children's intellectual/cognitive or social/emotional needs"—has evolved rather dramatically from the 1950s to the present. Today, educational programming offers a rich array of educational opportunities for young viewers that engage them long beyond the duration and confines of the telecasts of traditional television programs.

Don Herbert and a young assistant conduct an experiment on *Watch Mr. Wizard,* a pioneering show in educational television for children. The program aired from 1951 to 1965 on NBC, then returned for a season in 1971. Created and hosted by Herbert, the show aimed to make science applicable to children's everyday experiences, and it often used everyday household items in the demonstrations. *Watch Mr. Wizard* was shown in the classrooms of many schools and spawned thousands of Mr. Wizard Science Clubs in the 1950s and 1960s.

SOURCE: Photo by NBC Television/Getty Images.

THE ORIGINS OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

The development of educational television was greatly facilitated by a television station license "freeze" between 1948 and 1952, during which the FCC paused during a period of frenzied development in television's early history to engage in a number of important deliberations that would ultimately shape the future of broadcasting. The concept of educational programming was extremely controversial at this time. Commercial broadcasters claimed that the reservation of noncommercial channels was not necessary, because their programs already served the educational needs of the audience. In fact, they argued that broadcasting was too important a resource to entrust to those who had no profit motive to spur the new medium's development. Such an industry view had prevailed during the discussion of public radio leading up to the Communications Act of 1934.

An important "voice crying in the wilderness" played a pivotal role in shifting the ground rules for television away from radio's prevailing model of pure commercialism. Frieda B. Hennock, the first woman FCC Commissioner, argued eloquently and forcefully that 10% of television channels should be reserved for educational television. Thanks to an effective public communication campaign initiated by Commissioner Hennock, when the FCC issued its Sixth Report and Order in April 1952, the license allocation plan included 242 specific channel reservations for non-profit educational licenses.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE 1950S TO THE 1980S

During 1950s and early 1960s, as educational television stations struggled through a formative period, most of the educational programs introduced for children featured adult "talking heads" addressing child audiences, assorted puppet shows, make-believe vignettes, and other primitive means of instruction and edification. Targeted children's programming, such as *Friendly Giant* and *Tales of Poindexter,* occupied only a minor percentage of programming time on these educational stations, and they were not given much consideration on the emerging state and national educational programming networks.

Educators and the general public were not very satisfied with these early programming developments for children. In response, the Ford Foundation and other philanthropic organizations not only supported capital facility grants to community and educational organizations, which helped dramatically expand the number of educational stations, they also joined with federal education agencies to support a number of remarkable programming initiatives during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. As a result, a number of innovative and popular programs were developed and broadcast, including the perennially popular and educationally effective *Sesame Street,* developed by the Children's Television Workshop (CTW, now Sesame Workshop).

CTW programming revolutionized children's educational television, in large part because CTW President Joan Ganz Cooney brought producers, educational advisors, and researchers together to create educational programming. Not only did the CTW team fuse previously independent forces, they programmed

for the developmental level of their programs' targeted audiences, and they harnessed the production capabilities of the television medium to meet specific instructional goals while also addressing critical societal needs, such as getting young children reading for school (e.g., *Sesame Street*), improving the reading skills of school-age children (e.g., *The Electric Company*), and steering girls toward career interests in science (e.g., *3-2-1 Contact*).

Other programming and production companies successfully imitated the program development and production model of CTW and launched noteworthy programs like *Freestyle* and *Vegetable Soup,* essentially turning the late 1960s and the 1970s into the first golden age of children's educational television. This period also featured the evolution of programming from "educational" to "public" television, which culminated in the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.

The 1980s were to witness a setback in educational programming because of President Ronald Reagan's "marketplace approach" to broadcast regulation, under which the FCC no longer required stations or networks to broadcast children's programming. Only financially secure and extremely popular children's programs, such as *Sesame Street* and *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood,* were to survive in the era of Reaganomics.

THE 1990S AND BEYOND

Three developments revived children's educational programming efforts in the 1990s and through the portals of the 21st century. The first was the Children's Television Act of 1990, through which Congress took a stand to advocate children's rights to educational and instructional programming. The second was the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which reinforced and strengthened the tenets that children's educational programming was a "public good" and specified guidelines for broadcasters to follow regarding educational television. The third was the increased advocacy of the nation's parents, caregivers, and child advocates, which led cable and satellite programming channels such as Nickelodeon (especially their preschool entity, Nick Jr.) and the Disney Channel to effectively create and market curriculum-based programming that could and would be both educationally valid and commercially successful in the new era of narrowcasting and highly targeted programming.

These developments led to a new golden era of children's programming, both on public television in the form of entertaining, enlightening, and educationally viable PBS Kids programs such as *Arthur, Barney, Cyberchase, Dragon Tales,* and *Reading Rainbow,* and on commercial cable channels in the form of *Blue's Clues, Dora the Explorer,* and *Bear in the Big Blue House,* among many others. Most of these highly successful modern programs have the same ingredients that have allowed *Sesame Street* to survive and thrive for more than three decades: developmentally appropriate curricula, effective formative and summative evaluation strategies, high-quality production features, and solid entertainment values. The contemporary successful programs generally target the preschool audience, however, leaving room for improvement in programming targeting older children. Moreover, all the successful programs of this latter golden age have taken full advantage of the contemporary digital environment and the potential of convergence, cross-product promotion, and intermedia marketing to enhance the appeal and value of educational programming in the 21st century.

—Jennings Bryant and
J. Alison Bryant

See also Commercial Television and Radio in Schools; Commercial Television in Schools: Channel One; Educational Television, Effects of; Educational Television, Programming in; Television, History of Children's Programs on

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EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION, PROGRAMMING IN

Commercial television has offered little educational programming for children during most of its history

in the United States. Periodic increases in the quantity of educational children's programs shown on commercial stations have resulted largely from the occasional threat of governmental intervention. Public television, on the other hand, has fostered a sizeable catalog of high-quality children's educational programming, including some of the best-loved and longest-running shows on television. Although the emphasis in much of the early educational programming was on developing cognitive skills, there has been a recent increase in programs intended to develop social and emotional skills and to teach prosocial values such as kindness and respect for others.

EARLY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Early television in the United States was largely void of programming for children that had a specific educational intent. One notable exception was *Watch Mr. Wizard,* a science show for kids that aired on NBC from 1951 to 1965. It was created and hosted by Don Herbert (a.k.a. "Mr. Wizard") who, with the help of his young assistants, conducted dramatic experiments demonstrating basic principles of natural science. *The Ding Dong School* was another early educational show that premiered in 1952 on NBC. Dr. Frances Horwich, a professor of education, served as the host and encouraged creativity through simple lessons for preschoolers in singing, finger painting, and make-believe. Despite strong ratings and critical acclaim, NBC cancelled the show after 4 years to replace it with more lucrative programming for adults. CBS's most significant contribution to educational programming was *Captain Kangaroo* (1955–1984). Although it was primarily an entertainment show for young children, *Captain Kangaroo* also wove educational themes and positive, "life-oriented" messages into many of the stories, skits, and dialogues with the kindly host (played for nearly 30 years by Bob Keeshan).

Government concern about the quality of television for children spurred networks to increase their informational programming for children in the 1962 television season. Most of these educational shows were short lived, such as NBC's *Exploring* and CBS's *Reading Room.* However, *Discovery,* a documentary-style series that explored different parts of the world, lasted on ABC for 9 years.

PBS REVOLUTIONIZES EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

Programming for children in the United States made a huge leap forward in 1969 with the debut of the non-commercial, educational Public Broadcasting System. Two of PBS's first offerings, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and *Sesame Street,* revolutionized children's television. Fred Rogers created *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* (1969–2001) to encourage young children's healthy emotional development. The show featured Rogers conversing directly with his audience about their feelings and experiences, visiting with his neighbors, and sending the child audience to the "Land of Make-Believe," where puppets and cast members explored socioemotional themes. The show's slow pace and Rogers' gentle, low-key style engaged very young children in topics ranging from learning to tie shoes to coping with the loss of a loved one. *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* remained in production for more than 30 years and continues in syndication on PBS.

Sesame Street (1969–) was created by Joan Ganz Cooney and the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) with $8 million in funding from private foundations and the U.S. Office of Education. Cooney was struck by children's rapt attention to television advertising, and she developed the idea for a show that would apply advertising techniques—such as high levels of activity, jingles, and animation—to "sell" preschoolers on skills that would prepare them for school. In particular, the show sought to advance the school readiness of low-income and minority children.

CTW's production team consisted of experienced entertainment television producers and experts in childhood education. They grounded *Sesame Street* in a curriculum that initially focused on social and affective development as well as preacademic skills in language, numbers, reasoning, and perception. Their groundbreaking approach utilized empirical research to make sure that *Sesame Street* achieved its educational goals. *Sesame Street's* magazine format alternated cartoons, live-action segments featuring everyday children, and episodes set in a diverse inner-city neighborhood inhabited by humans and lovable Muppet characters. The combination of educational content with appealing music, animation, puppets, and celebrity guests made *Sesame Street* a hit with parents and children alike. Today, *Sesame Street* is viewed by almost half of all preschoolers in the United States on

a weekly basis, and it has a nearly 100% penetration of its target audience of preschool-age children. It is broadcast in more than 40 other countries and has at least 10 foreign language versions.

NETWORK PROGRAMMING

In the early 1970s, child advocacy groups petitioned the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to require an hour of educational programming for children each day from each broadcast licensee. The FCC declined to make any formal requirements, but it did develop vague standards that called for stations to try to provide a "reasonable amount" of educational children's programming. The networks responded by introducing more educational shows in 1971. NBC reintroduced *Mr. Wizard* and developed a social issues show for teens called *Take a Giant Step*; Walter Cronkite anchored *You Are There* to teach kids history on CBS; and ABC created *Curiosity Shop*, which provided answers to young children's questions about the world. However, all of these shows were cancelled after only one season, unable to compete with cartoons for ratings.

A few other shows with educational content had greater staying power on commercial television in the 1970s and early 1980s. *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids* (1972–1984) was an animated, syndicated show based loosely on the childhood friends of comedian and educator Bill Cosby (who hosted and co-produced the show). Developed with help from UCLA educators, it presented a positive depiction of urban black youth who solved personal problems together, interspersed with humor and musical numbers. Occasionally, the networks offered specials that had educational themes. *ABC Afterschool Specials* and *CBS Afternoon Playhouse* presented dramas that dealt with social problems common to many young people, and *CBS Library* and *CBS Storybreak* presented dramatic retellings of children's literature.

The networks also introduced educational "pop-ups" shown in the few minutes between Saturday-morning cartoon programs. CBS created *In the News,* mini-newscasts for kids; ABC had *Schoolhouse Rock*, which taught grammar, history, science, and math concepts using catchy jingles and animation; and NBC aired *One to Grow On* with celebrities talking to young viewers about issues such as peer pressure and lying.

Meanwhile, PBS added to its lineup of educational programming with shows like *The Electric Company* (1971–1981), a hip program that promoted reading skills; *Zoom* (1972–1980), a show hosted by kids that encouraged young viewers to invent their own activities, games, and songs; and *Reading Rainbow* (1983–2004), a show that encouraged reading through animated versions of picture books, on-location adventures, and book reviews by real children.

IMPACT OF DEREGULATION AND REGULATION

The 1980s witnessed a huge boom in children's programming, driven by lucrative licensing of television characters. Television stations often received financial incentives to air shows based on licensed characters, so there was little motivation to air educational programming. At the same time, the government's deregulatory environment favored "marketplace" competition, and the FCC allowed broadcasters to provide whatever level of educational programming they deemed adequate. As a result, children's educational programs largely disappeared from commercial broadcast lineups.

In 1990, Congress enacted the Children's Television Act (CTA), which required television stations to air educational programming for children as a condition of license renewal. However, the bill did not specify what qualified as educational programming or how much programming was required, and it received little enforcement. In their license renewal applications, many stations claimed that popular commercial programming such as *The Jetsons*, *The Flintstones,* and *G. I. Joe* was educational. Under a new chairman in 1996, the FCC finally adopted rules that defined educational programs as those that are made specifically for children and have education as a significant purpose. The FCC also adopted a guideline specifying that stations offer 3 hours of children's educational programming a week.

RECENT PROGRAMMING TRENDS

Following the CTA, the amount of educational programming increased on network television, with shows like *Science Court* on ABC and *The Magic Schoolbus* on Fox. PBS continued to air new educational series, including science-oriented shows such as *Bill Nye the Science Guy* and *Kratts' Creatures;* the language skills show *Ghostwriter*; and the geography quiz show *Where in the World Is Carmen San Diego?* In addition, several cable channels have also offered educational

programming. The children's channel Nickelodeon added significantly to its educational offerings when it developed the Nick Jr. block of programming aimed at 2-to-5-year-olds. Programs on Nick Jr., such as *Blue's Clues, Gullah Gullah Island,* and *Dora the Explorer* were designed to encourage prosocial development and cognitive problem-solving skills. Other cable channels vying for preschoolers and their parents include Noggin (a noncommercial educational channel developed by Nickelodeon and CTW) and the *Ready, Set, Learn* block on the Discovery Kids channel. In 2005, PBS debuted Sprout, a cable channel devoted to educational programs for kids that includes advertising.

The emphasis in educational programming has shifted from cognitive skills to teaching values such as care and respect for others and to developing social and emotional competence. This trend toward prosocial education can be seen in shows like *Barney and Friends, Arthur*, *Teletubbies, Doug,* and *Recess.* The rise in prosocial programming may be attributed in part to the public's concerns about television's influence on morals and values; moreover, prosocial themes lend themselves well to the human-interest comedy format that commercial television prefers.

—Meredith Li-Vollmer

See also Children's Television Act of 1990; Educational Television, Effects of; Sesame Workshop; Television, Prosocial Content and

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, ADDICTION TO

A growing number of reports in the popular press have examined excessive use of video games among children and adolescents ("joystick junkies"). Video games rely on multiple reinforcements in that different features may be differently rewarding to different people. These rewards can be intrinsic (e.g., improving a high score, beating a friend's high score, getting one's name in the "Hall of Fame," mastering the machine) or extrinsic (e.g., peer admiration). To date, there has been very little research directly investigating electronic game (video game) addiction, although almost all studies have concentrated on adolescent use. For instance, Mark Griffiths and Nigil Hunt surveyed 400 adolescents (12 to 16 years of age) to establish their level of dependence on a scale adapted from the DSM criteria for pathological gambling. Scores indicated that one in five children were dependent on computer games. Furthermore, 7% of the sample claimed they played more than 30 hours a week. Similar findings have also been reported in other studies. There is no doubt that, for a minority of children and adolescents, video games can take up considerable time, although there is still much debate as to whether very excessive video game play is a true addiction.

There have been many reports of behavioral signs of video game dependency among adolescents, including stealing money to play arcade games or to buy new game cartridges, skipping school and sacrificing social activities to play video games, not doing homework, getting bad marks at school, becoming irritable or annoyed if unable to play, and playing longer than intended. Other, indirect evidence of addictive and excessive play comes from the many health consequences that have been reported in the literature. These have included photosensitive epilepsy, auditory hallucinations, enuresis, encoprisis, wrist pain, neck pain, elbow pain, tenosynovitis (also called "nintendinitis"), hand-arm vibration syndrome, repetitive strain injuries, and obesity.

Other speculative negative aspects of video game playing that have been reported include the belief that video game play is socially isolating and prevents children from developing social skills. However, studies by Carol Phillips and colleagues and by others have found no difference in social interactions

between players and nonplayers. Adverse effects are likely to be relatively minor and temporary, resolving spontaneously with decreased frequency of play, or likely to affect only a small subgroup of children and adolescents. Excessive players run the highest risk of developing health problems, although more research appears to be much needed.

—Mark D. Griffiths

See also Electronic Games, Positive Uses of; Internet Use, Addiction to

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, AGE AND

As electronic games have spread to a variety of platforms, they have been used more and more by people of all ages—from very young children to adults. Because the electronic game market continues to change, use of the games is also in flux. Cultural differences among countries and among families lead to a variety of uses, and the market for games varies among countries. Nonetheless, some general trends in the United States and Europe can be described, especially in terms of gender preferences and age of users.

ELECTRONIC GAMES: ACCESS AND OWNERSHIP

Electronic games have become an important part of the children's media menu. Three quarters of all children live in households with computers, and about half of all children have access to game consoles. The rate of children's ownership of electronic games climbs sharply beginning at age 7, reaches its high point between the ages of 12 and 13, and then begins to decline. This trend can be explained by children's increased independence and reading ability as they enter school; then, during adolescence, as other private interests and school demands come into the foreground, interest in electronic games wanes.

USE OF DIFFERENT PLATFORMS

Children discover computer games very early. At age 3, one fourth of children have already played a computer game. By age 6, this number increases to two thirds. Children up to age 6 play video games, whether on consoles or on handheld devices, somewhat less than computer games. But between the ages of 3 and 6, video game use increases rapidly; by the time they enter school, half of all children have played a video game.

Like ownership of electronic games, the use of electronic games is greatest at age 13, and then gaming time begins to decrease. While about three fourths of 9-to-10-year-olds play electronic games, almost 80% of 12-to-13-year-olds do so. After age 15, the rate is lower than that for 9-to-10-year-olds. During the peak ages for playing electronic games—between 12 and 13 years—young people play such games for more than 30 minutes a day, and boys play three times as long as girls.

The use of online games first becomes significant as children reach school age and grows considerably as they become adults. The obvious reason is that parents control the purchase of telecommunications in their household and regulate their children's use of the Internet. Between the ages of 15 and 16, the number of children with their own Internet connections increases considerably.

GENDER AND GAME USAGE

Gender is an important factor in electronic game usage for children as young as 4 to 6 years. One third of girls in this age group have played a video game, and one half of boys of this age have done so. On a typical day, the difference in usage rates between girls and boys from 4 to 6 years old is enormous—not even 1 in 10 girls plays video games on a typical day, but

one fourth of all boys do. This trend holds for all age groups; for children between the ages of 9 and 16, 80% of boys play electronic games, but barely two thirds of girls do. In addition, boys spend about three times as much time as girls playing electronic games.

MEDIA FUNCTION AND GENRES

Electronic games have become a fairly important part of children's lives. In the 9-to-16 age group, electronic media are second only to TV in children's search for excitement. At the younger end of this age group, children tend to play console and personal computer games. As children get older, they increasingly prefer online games. Boys turn to e-games for excitement about three times as often as girls do.

In terms of game types, children and young people from 9 to 16 years old prefer adventure, fighting, and sport games; games with car or aircraft themes; and card games, board games, and puzzle games. Within this group of themes, there are clear differences in preferences according to age and gender. The differing interests of adolescent boys and girls are reflected in each group's predilection for certain e-games.

Boys' interest in various genres of electronic games is generally constant across age groups. Boys prefer fast-action games. Boys 6 to 16 years play mostly fighting games, sports games, and car games. Additionally, from about age 11, boys develop an enduring interest in games in which they must plan things.

Girls, on the other hand, tend to prefer narrative games. Adventure games also seem to interest girls of all age groups. Other genres preferred by girls are somewhat more varied: Whereas younger girls are more interested in drawing, painting, and teaching games, girls age 15 and older are more likely to play card games, board games, and puzzle games.

GENDER AND GAME AVAILABILITY

The fact that boys play more e-games than girls do is clearly related to the kinds of games available; electronic games are made mainly for boys. Boys are interested in sports, adventure, and science fiction, and they play games that correspond to these interests. Girls, on the other hand, have different preferences, and their interests change during adolescence more than those of boys. Because girls find fewer games that suit them, they turn to other media that better fit their needs. The huge success of the computer game *Sims*—in both younger and older age groups—shows that girls, too, will embrace a computer game as long as it matches their interests.

—Susanne Kubisch

See also Electronic Games, Gender and; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Media Genre Preferences

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, COGNITIVE EFFECTS OF

The cognitive effects of playing electronic games relate to information processing, gaining understanding, and acquiring knowledge. Thus far, research generally has focused on basic aspects of information processing. The established effects on the gamer's cognitive system are diverse and almost always positive. Cognitive effects found among groups of children and college students have included, for example, more focused visual attention, better spatial representation, and enhanced memory. Research on positive effects somewhat counterbalances the emphasis on negative effects. The recognition of the positive cognitive effects of gaming points to a vast educational potential inside, and particularly outside, the classroom.

The possible cognitive effects are very much dependent on the kind of electronic game that is played. Simple Internet games that can be completed in less than a minute may affect the basic modalities of information processing, in particular with respect to the visual and attentional systems. Today's complex 3-D games that require dozens of hours to reach the final goal may also influence more advanced cognitive skills, such as deductive reasoning, planning strategies, and decision making.

Research on the cognitive effects of electronic games has been dedicated largely to basic kinds of cognitive processing. Pioneering work was done in the early 1980s by Geoffrey Loftus and Elisabeth Loftus. In *Mind at Play*, they discussed the possible effects of the arcade games of that time on, for example, memory, attention, and eye-hand coordination. Research about cognitive effects was advanced in the 1990s by Patricia Greenfield and her colleagues. In their series of studies, the Greenfield team found effects of gaming on different aspects of the cognitive system.

A first effect was found with respect to *spatial representation.* This is a basic cognitive skill involved in dealing with two-dimensional images of a hypothetical two- or three-dimensional world. Greenfield and her team studied spatial representation in the context of a rather basic arcade game. Their 10- and 11-year-old participants were invited to play *Marble Madness*. The game involved guiding a marble along a three-dimensional grid. The results showed that spatial performance improved as a result of playing the game. The effect did not occur when children practiced on an electronic word game.

A second effect concerned *iconic representation,* the ability to read images. For most people, this ability is less well developed than verbal kinds of representation. The Greenfield team found that playing an electronic game shifted representational styles from verbal to iconic. Undergraduates from the United States and Italy played *Concentration* either on a computer or on a board. In the subsequent test, the participants were asked to describe a computer animation they had seen earlier. The computer gamers used more diagrams, an iconic kind of representation, whereas the board gamers used verbal descriptions.

A third effect occurred with respect to *divided visual attention*. Playing an electronic game requires that players keep track simultaneously of many stimuli at different locations in the visual field. This can be done only if players are able to quickly shift their attention from one set of information to another. One of the Greenfield studies confirmed that expert players of electronic games are better at dividing their visual attention than novices. The participants had to locate a target on the computer screen as rapidly as they could. When the target appeared in an unexpected location, expert players responded faster than novices. More recently, Shawn Green and Daphne Bavelier tested visual attention and its spatial distribution in an experiment. One group with no earlier experience with electronic games was asked to play *Medal of Honor,* a rather complex 3-D war game that requires divided visual attention. The participants were trained for 1 hour per day for 10 consecutive days. A second group, the control group, played the puzzle game *Tetris.* It is less complex and does not appeal to divided visual attention, because it demands focus on one object at a time. After 10 days, only the *Medal of Honor* gamers showed a significant increase in their capacity for divided visual attention.

A fourth effect concerned the *visual-spatial link.* Greenfield and her colleagues investigated a possible link between the visual system and the spatial representation of objects. The college students in their study first played *The Empire Strikes Back.* The game required navigating through 3-D space represented on the two-dimensional computer screen. To test the cognitive effects, participants were then asked to perform a mental paper-folding task. They had to imagine how they would fold a piece of paper. A comparison between expert players and novices showed that the experts were better at the task. The practice of gaming made it easier for them to imagine the spatial representation of an object, in this case a piece of paper.

With regard to the cognitive function of *memory,* Loftus and Loftus pointed out that the rapid attention shifts that are part and parcel of electronic games require the immediate storage of new information. One must, after all, remember the position of the original visual stimulus when confronted with a novel one. More recently, Anne-Siri Oyen and James Bebko studied the effects of gaming on memory from a different angle. They investigated whether gaming would enhance memory for content. They found a positive effect: Children from 4 to 7 years old were better at remembering pictures from an interesting electronic game than pictures presented in a formal lesson.

Research on cognitive effects of electronic gaming has been of limited scope. Nevertheless, it points to the educational potential of these media. Electronic games are played for fun, but the entertainment experience goes hand in hand with the enhancement of

important cognitive functions. If players and their parents succeed in preventing excessive play, gaming may turn out to be a beneficial experience for many.

—*Jeroen Jansz*

See also Electronic Games, Cognitive Scripts and; Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Games, Gender and; Electronic Games, Positive Uses of; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Electronic Games, Types of

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, COGNITIVE SCRIPTS AND

Electronic games (video games, including console, handheld, and computer-based games) have become a common leisure choice for children and adolescents. However, many of the most popular games have considerable violent content. To be a successful player, a cycle must be established in which one chooses preprogrammed violent actions and is reinforced for one's choices. There is concern that this repetition and reinforcement could lead to the development of cognitive scripts for aggression and violence that are outside of player awareness and that could later affect situation perception and behavioral choice.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE SCRIPTS

To understand the concept of cognitive scripts, the concept of knowledge structures must first be defined. Memories of past experiences are stored as knowledge structures, and these structures determine, in part, how people understand and respond to new experiences. A cognitive script is a specific type of knowledge structure, a general representation of how common events typically unfold. It is literally a "script" for behavior, much like a screenplay, which dictates the actions of the actors. Scripts tell us what to expect and what to do in common, frequently encountered situations. Cognitive scripts begin to develop early in childhood, typically between ages 2 and 3, based on children's daily life experiences and their observations. For children, scripts may be developed for such activities as how to behave at a birthday party or in a fast-food restaurant, or how to respond to perceived provocation. Script development continues throughout life. For example, adolescents and adults develop scripts for such common activities as driving a car.

THE ACTIVATION OF COGNITIVE SCRIPTS

Once a coherent representation is developed, cognitive scripts are stored as knowledge structures in long-term memory. Cognitive scripts then may be activated automatically, without conscious awareness, given the appropriate experiential triggers. A script is activated when related memories are energized through exposure to a new situation that is similar in some way to the existing cognitive script. When a new experience triggers a preexisting script, the individual will either act in accordance with the script or will fantasize about the actions. Acting on or fantasizing about the script (*cognitive rehearsal*) may ultimately increase the script's accessibility as new associations with similar concepts are built and existing associations are strengthened. Memories and experiences with similar meanings and those that are often activated together develop the strongest associations. Therefore, scripts not only function independently but also may cluster and form a network of behavioral choices. Because a large number of situations can activate this network, particular types of scripts may become chronically accessible, may be more easily triggered, and may be resistant to change. Scripts for aggression are thought to be particularly resistant to change.

COGNITIVE SCRIPTS AND VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES

In any situation, a number of competing scripts could be triggered and enacted. In addition to relevance to the situation, scripts must be consistent with perceived

social norms. Certain social norms, including those regarding the use of aggression and violence, dictate that ethical beliefs guide behavioral choice and thus trigger a process of moral evaluation. Once this process is initiated, higher-order emotions (such as empathy) and knowledge structures (such as attitudes relevant to the situation) are activated. However, desensitization to the ethical implications of aggression and violence could interfere with moral evaluation processes. Violent video games present aggression and violence as justified, without negative consequences, and fun. Repeated exposure to these messages, and practice and reinforcement of violent actions in the game context, may desensitize players to the true impact of violence. It is reported that the army has used video games to desensitize soldiers, and emerging research suggests that children and adolescents with a preference for violent games have lower empathy and stronger proviolence attitudes, suggesting possible desensitization.

The cycle of demonstration, practice, and reinforcement makes the video game-playing environment ideal for the development of cognitive scripts related to game activity. In the case of violent video games, chronically accessible scripts for aggression may be established. Individuals will then tend to focus on information that is consistent with the script and overlook or distort inconsistent information. Children and adolescents with chronically accessible aggressive scripts may process neutral situations as though they are aggression related. For example, a child who is repeatedly exposed to violent video games in which hypervigilance against threat and aggressive responses are valued and rewarded may misperceive an innocent nudge in a crowded lunch line as an act of aggression and retaliate with an angry push back.

Given the popularity of violent video games, their potential for encouraging the development of aggressive scripts, and the possiiblity that desensitization to violence will subvert the moral evaluation processes that inhibit aggression, policymakers need to evaluate all options to protect children from unintended adverse effects of exposure to violent video games.

—Jeanne Funk

See also Aggression, Electronic Games and; Electronic Games, Moral Behavior in; Violence, Desensitization Toward

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, EFFECTS OF

There is a great deal of controversy over what the effects of electronic games may be on young people. Public and media attention have tended to focus on the perceived harms of electronic game use—particularly claims that playing violent games may encourage violent behavior—and much experimental research has been done to attempt to establish such a link. Excessive game play has also been linked with physical and psychological harms. However, a significant number of academics see computer games as potentially or actually beneficial to players—improving problem-solving skills, for example—and these researchers tend to suggest that studies showing harmful effects are flawed.

The claims of both sides can be divided broadly into two categories: (a) those that deal with effects thought to stem from the kind of content found in games (e.g., violent imagery on the one hand, educational content on the other) and (b) those that involve

effects thought to relate to the nature of electronic games themselves (e.g., their "addictive" nature, on the one hand, and their exercise of eye-hand coordination skills, on the other).

Any assessment of the overall impact of electronic games on young people is and seems likely to remain very difficult, both because researchers have tended to concentrate on the particular aspects of most interest to them, ignoring other aspects, and because the content and even the fundamental nature of computer gaming continues to change as technology advances.

CONTENT EFFECTS

Violence

The most studied area in electronic games research, particularly in research about young people, is undoubtedly the theorized link between violent game playing and violent behavior. The leading theoretical model for this link is Craig A. Anderson's general affective aggression model, which suggests that playing a violent game can cause violent thoughts, feelings, and even physical symptoms (elevated heart rate) that, if repeated over time, can change habits of behavior, leading to more aggression. Steven Kirsh suggests in a research review that younger adolescents may be particularly at risk for influence by such games, both for developmental reasons and because game playing tends to be at its highest at this stage of life.

For ethical reasons, direct experiments on children have not been done; however, experiments have been conducted with college students, and survey-based studies have been done with younger children.

Surveys of both children and adults have shown a link between playing violent electronic games and violent attitudes and behavior, but it is not clear whether the games lead to violence or whether violent children tend to prefer violent games (or both). Studies tracking gamers over a period of years would be necessary to determine which of these two factors is more important and to help to understand whether any effects are short-term or long-term, but such studies have not yet been done.

When lab experiments have been done (often with college students), they have tended to show at least a short-term increase in aggressive thoughts and actions. In an influential study by Craig A. Anderson and Karen E. Dill, undergraduates played a violent electronic game (*Wolfenstein 3D*) for three 15-minute sessions. When tested immediately after each session, they responded to a blast of noise with a longer blast of noise than students who had just played a nonviolent game. The violent gamers also read words associated with aggression in a subsequent test more rapidly than the control group, which the researchers suggest indicates higher "accessibility of aggressive thoughts."

Meta-analyses of the experimental literature (studies that attempt to combine the results of several articles on similar themes) have suggested that, where playing violent electronic games is linked to violent behavior or attitudes, it explains about 4% of such behavior.

Because of the (necessarily) artificial nature of experimental aggression testing, however, these findings and others of a similar nature have been questioned by more skeptical scholars. It is widely accepted that, if there is a connection between violent electronic game use and violence, it is only one of several influencing factors. More research has been called for to explore in detail what particular kinds of violence in games might be most harmful, what the long-term effects might be, and what kinds of backgrounds are most likely to make children (or adults) vulnerable to "picking up" violent behavior from violent games.

Whether or not violent gaming is shown to lead to violence, however, many scholars argue that the precautionary principle should prevail, and children should be protected from violent content because it may well be harmful, and there is no evidence that violence in games is in itself beneficial.

Stereotyping and Other Undesirable Content

Gender

Although game violence has received the most attention, other forms of potentially harmful game content have also been studied. One study examined the most popular games available on several game consoles and on PCs and found that only 16% of human characters in the games were female and that sex roles were frequently stereotyped. A similar study 4 years later found, in addition, that a quarter of women shown in electronic games had unrealistic body types (compared with 2% of men) and that 41% of women in games wore sexually revealing clothing. This, they argue, could contribute to low self-esteem among women who see or play these games.

Race and Propaganda

David Leonard examined *Grand Theft Auto III* and various American sports games and found that they tend to reinforce racial stereotypes. In addition to inadvertent bias in games, a number of groups are attempting directly to harness games to influence those who play them. "Propaganda" games range from those used as a recruitment tool by the U.S. Army, which has a multimillion-dollar budget, to smaller-scale projects such as *Under Ash/Under Siege,* which portrays Palestinians fighting a brutal Israeli occupier, and *Ethnic Cleansing,* produced by the openly racist National Alliance, which encourages the player to kill African Americans, Jews, and Latina/os. By contrast, the United Nations' *Food Force* game teaches some of the challenges faced in the delivery of food aid.

There are also a number of games with religious messages, and companies are increasingly embedding advertising and product placement in games (analysts predict spending for this could rise to nearly $1 billion by 2010). In-game advertising has been little studied outside of marketing journals, so its effects are not clear yet, nor is whether the effects are any different from those ascribed to advertising on television and in other media.

Educational Content

There is a thriving market in explicitly educational game software (*edutainment*), which attempts to teach children a broad range of content and skills, from simple rote learning games to business and other simulations designed to help them understand complex processes. In addition, many popular games have educational components. *Civilization* and *Age of Empires* games, for example, provide information about various early civilizations in the interactive help file and manual for the game, although they may be inaccurate or harbor ideological biases. Some educators believe that many electronic games can help children learn even when their content is not explicitly educational.

MEDIUM EFFECTS

A number of scholars claim that effects can be ascribed to computer game playing regardless of the nature of the game itself. Arguably, however, given the immense diversity of game genres—from *Solitaire* on Windows to massively multi-player fantasy worlds such as *Everquest*—most theories of game medium effects make some assumptions (tacit or explicit) about the genre (and content) of the games they are studying. It is also reasonable to suppose that any effects of game playing would be different in different cultures that have different attitudes toward computers and games, but, unfortunately, there have been few cross-cultural game studies.

Addiction

It is clear from surveys that, although the majority of game players play "normally," a small number play the game or games of their choice more than might be considered socially acceptable. For example, almost 1 in 10 adolescents from a self-selected sample of *Everquest* players told researchers they played the game for more than 50 hours a week. Even those who played less often reported significant displacement of other activities; more than a fifth of all the adolescents in the sample reported sacrificing work or study to play the game, and a similar proportion reported sacrificing sleep.

Two large-scale surveys of adolescents 12 to 16 in the UK found that 7% played computer games for 30 hours or more per week. It is still not clear what level of game play should be considered "addiction," what might cause game addiction, which children might be vulnerable, or whether, in the absence of games, the same children might have become "addicted" instead to other activities such as watching television or reading books.

Obesity

A number of researchers (and press commentators) have tried to draw a connection between excessive electronic game use and obesity among children and adolescents, just as earlier studies have attempted (largely unsuccessfully) to link obesity with television watching. A large-scale study in the United States (from data collected in 1997) found that lower-weight children played electronic games either very little or a lot, and that girls with higher weight played more games, but boys did not—results that are difficult to interpret.

Other Forms of Physical Harm

A variety of health risks have been associated with electronic game play. Epileptic seizures can be triggered by flashing lights, which are present in some games, and musculoskeletal problems (e.g., wrist injuries) can be caused by awkward or sustained

postures and repetitious movements during excessive play. A recent review of research found that, although no studies have yet been conducted to establish the prevalence of physical harm to children and adolescents from excessive game play, case studies and lab reports provide persuasive evidence that concern is warranted. However, there is little evidence of serious adverse effects from normal play, and effects normally disappear when gaming is reduced.

Loneliness

It has been suggested that excessive computer game use might harm children's social development by taking away from the time they have available to socialize face to face. Surveys of young people overall have found either (a) that no social differences exist between gamers and nongamers, or (b) that frequent gamers actually meet friends outside school more often than less frequent players do. However, a survey of 1,000 Flemish children 8 to 10 years old found that the 10% of children who played games heavily—more than 2 hours a day—tended to be more socially isolated than those who played less. Whether heavy gaming causes isolation or is an attempt to compensate for it is not clear. Studies have tended to be of single-player gaming; the social effects of online play with multiple players may be different.

Physical Benefits

Although electronic games are often associated with health problems, they can also be used to improve the health of the unwell. For example, games have been shown to be effective in distracting patients from pain and have been used as a form of physiotherapy and even as a means to help retarded and autistic children learn to interact, although these effects have not been studied over a long period. There is also some evidence that electronic game play can improve eye-hand coordination and spatial intelligence (pattern matching and the like). Some academics have suggested that a significant rise in scores on the nonverbal part of IQ tests in the last few decades can be attributed to the increased amount of electronic game play.

Higher-Order Cognitive Benefits

A number of scholars and commentators have suggested that games can teach children valuable mental skills. In his book *What Video Games Have to Teach Us,* James Paul Gee outlines 36 ways children—and adults—can be educated by "good" games (a class of games that, in his view, is not restricted to explicitly educational games but can include "first-person shooters," such as *Half Life*). These positive outcomes include (a) learning how complicated sign systems operate through understanding the way a game operates, (b) having the opportunity to play with virtual identities and reflect on one's own, and (c) exercising knowledge gathering through social networks when gamers swap tips on how to complete a game. Whether the skills learned through gaming are transferable to other situations, and in what circumstances they are transferred, remains to be shown.

—David Brake

See also Aggression, Electronic Games and; Electronic Games, Addiction to; Electronic Games, Moral Behavior in; Electronic Games, Positive Uses of; Electronic Games, Violence in; General Aggression Model (GAM); Regulation, Electronic Games

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, GENDER AND

Early studies of computer and electronic game use among children and adolescents consistently revealed

that girls were less likely than boys to spend time on these activities. With the introduction of the Internet, however, many of these gender differences in use have dissipated. For example, recent studies indicate that girls are just as likely as boys to use the Internet. Gender differences still are found, however, in the area of electronic gaming (i.e., computer, video, arcade games). More boys than girls report gaming, and boys report playing games different in type from those reported by girls. Concerns have been raised about this gender “imbalance” in game playing. At issue is the fact that moderate levels of electronic game playing may be positively related to computer literacy and cognitive development (e.g., spatial skills, decision making, reaction time, etc.). Girls who are nonusers, therefore, may be missing out on an important learning tool.

FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF ELECTRONIC GAME PLAYING

A consistent finding in the literature is that boys report playing electronic games more than girls do. Girls tend to be overrepresented among the nonusers. In addition, boys are much more likely than girls to be heavy game players (e.g., more than 30 hours a week), although this subgroup of males typically is small. Clear gender differences also are found in the type of electronic games that are played. Boys are more likely than girls to play sports, action, fighting, strategy, role-playing, and racing games. Heavy game players also are more likely to report playing violent games (e.g., fighting, action). Although girls also play violent games, they are more likely than boys to play educational games, puzzles, quiz and board games, and art games and to list them as their favorite games. Interestingly, girls and boys both are equally likely to report playing games that involve building model worlds. For example, girls appear to enjoy playing games such as *SimCity* and *The Sims* more than the more violent games that are popular with boys.

EXPLANATIONS FOR GENDER DIFFERENCES

It is difficult to know the cause of these gender differences, but multiple hypotheses have been generated. For example, games are created for the most part by males for males. The content of the games (competition, speed, violence), therefore, may be more attractive to boys than girls. Critics argue that many games have stereotyped and weak female protagonists or no female characters at all. Others have argued that the male bias in game design has resulted in more games with features that might match boys’ cognitive strengths. For example, some researchers argue that males, on average, tend to be better than females at skills such as spatial rotation and targeting (the ability to calculate trajectories of moving objects). These skills are rewarded in many electronic games. On the other hand, females, on average, may be stronger in object location, verbal memory, and color memory. Girls may prefer puzzles, card games, and board games because these games tend to draw on those skills. This is not to suggest, however, that girls lack the skills to play many electronic games; but at the beginning they may be at a disadvantage compared with boys. Importantly, this hypothesis does not appear to account well for the many games that require multiple skills.

Furthermore, researchers have suggested that gender differences in electronic gaming may exist because educational institutions often promote computer use among boys more than among girls. Girls also may have less social approval from peers for engaging in more-than-moderate levels of electronic game use. Other researchers have suggested that electronic games may not provide the social interaction that girls seek. Indeed, girls’ computer activities appear to be weighted more toward communication activities, such as email and chat rooms. Developers of electronic games have attempted to address some of these concerns by creating software geared specifically to girls, often by including nonviolent themes and female protagonists. These attempts, however, have not always been successful.

Clearly, there are multiple potential explanations for why boys consistently report playing electronic games more than girls, and research evidence to support these hypotheses is limited. For example, what might be *causes* and what might be *effects* of these differences in game playing still is unknown. In addition, it may be that girls are not necessarily disadvantaged because they play electronic games on average less than boys do. The link between electronic game use and positive youth development is not clear. Most importantly, these gender differences obscure the fact that within-group differences also are significant. In other words, there are many girls who play electronic games and boys who do not play electronic games.

It is only on average, or across the groups of boys and girls, that we find gender differences in electronic game play.

—Teena Willoughby

See also Aggression, Electronic Games and; Computer Use, Gender and; Computer Use, Rates of; Electronic Games, Cognitive Scripts and; Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Games, High-Risk Players of; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Electronic Games, Types of; Electronic Games, Violence in; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; Gender, Media Use and; Internet Use, Gender and; Internet Use, HomeNet Study and; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, HIGH-RISK PLAYERS OF

There has been considerable debate in recent years about the risks associated with violent electronic game play by children and adolescents, with some arguing for powerful effects and others suggesting the effects are trivial. However, many of these debates overlook one important consideration: Not all players are affected equally. As Michael Slater and colleagues argue in their downward spiral model of media effects, some youth may be relatively unscathed by media violence exposure, whereas others may be especially vulnerable to its influence. In other words, there may be what Jeanne Funk has called *high-risk players* of electronic games.

Many risk factors for youth violence have been identified; this entry focuses mainly on risk factors identified in scholarship on electronic games. The surgeon general's report on youth violence contains a more comprehensive set of risk factors. With respect to electronic games, it is important to remember that individual risk factors are not causes of gaming effects. Instead, they should be viewed as a set of conditions that facilitate the prediction of gaming effects, especially when several are present at once. A growing body of literature suggests how developmental, personality, social, and emotional factors, along with exposure to certain game content and technology, may put particular children at higher risk for negative game play outcomes such as aggressive behavior.

AGE AND DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES

Age and cognitive development of children may put them at greater risk for harm from electronic game play, with younger children being most susceptible. Because these children tend to focus on perceptually salient attributes of media such as video games, their attention may center on flashy violent content and exclude other contextual features, making them more susceptible than older children to the influence of violent content. Furthermore, Jeanne Funk suggests that children are at higher risk than adolescents because they lack the ability to measure their behavior in light of moral standards and the behavior of others. Without these influences, children are less likely to feel guilty about aggressive behavior and may internalize the violent worlds of popular video games as models for acceptable behavior. Although most evidence points to children being at higher risk, certain adolescents may also be at high risk because of their greater willingness and ability to engage in reckless behavior and because they may develop stronger, more complete scripts for violent behavior as a function of repeated electronic game play over time.

TRAIT AND PERSONALITY PREDISPOSITIONS

As suggested in the general aggression model (GAM) developed by Craig Anderson and colleagues, certain trait or personality attributes may make electronic game players more at risk for aggressive behavior. In one study, Anderson and Karen Dill surveyed

227 students and found real-life game play to be associated positively with aggressive behavior and delinquency, especially among males and individuals with greater trait aggression. Indicators of aggressive personality, which may include aggression and irritability, have been shown to relate positively to aggressive outcomes in both survey and laboratory studies of media violence effects. Children and adolescents with some form of aggressive personality are especially likely to be high-risk players of electronic games.

Several other personality factors may impact risk levels. Sensation seeking has been shown to create more robust positive relationships between violent media exposure (including video games) and aggression among teens. Type A personalities have been found to experience a greater level of arousal while playing electronic games than Type B personalities, increasing the risk of addiction for Type A personalities. Addiction or dependency on electronic games may result in more frequent rehearsal of violent in-game behaviors, thereby strengthening cognitive scripts for aggression as suggested by the GAM. There are other personality factors that may put players at higher risk as well, especially when several are present at once.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL FACTORS

Social problem-solving deficiencies are one reason both bullies and victims tend to be higher-risk game players. Bullies also display acceptance of intimidation of others, a general lack of empathy for victims in games, and low levels of remorse for violent behaviors. Victims tend to be highly emotionally reactive to the intimidation of bullies and may seek violent video games as a means of acting out their opposition to bullies without fear of reprisal. Although electronic games do not create bullies and victims, they may emphasize extant behavior patterns. Indeed, Michael Slater and colleagues found that victimization and sensation seeking moderate the relationship between use of violent media and aggressive behaviors, such that violent content reinforces experiences of anger.

Lack of parental influence may also place children at higher risk for gaming effects. Poor bonding with parents and peers has been associated with increased levels of emotional distress and instability. Children and adolescents with impaired emotional regulation skills may not experience, or may seek to maintain, a certain degree of negative arousal. When electronic games are used as a source of this arousal, children are at higher risk for addiction to or dependence on electronic games. When games are taken away, addicted or dependent children may experience symptoms of withdrawal. The positive effects of parental influence, however, may diminish when children reach adolescence and attempt to assert their independence from their parents.

THE ROLES OF USE, CONTENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

Children and adolescents who regularly play electronic games for extended periods of time are at higher risk for several reasons. In addition to strengthening aggressive personality, consistent with the GAM, excessive play may also be symptomatic of addiction or dependency. Most games have an addictive reward structure, making it easy for a child to lose track of time and get caught up in the experiences of a game to the exclusion of all else (called a *flow* or *presence* state). As Jeanne Funk documents, playing frequently can have negative effects because it displaces other, developmentally appropriate pursuits. She also notes that a strong preference for violent electronic games further adds to the high-risk status of players.

Indeed, certain types of game content and technology should put players at greater risk. Over time, games have evolved into increasingly realistic experiences, and young people who play newer violent electronic games, such as those taking place from a first-person perspective, may be more likely to identify with aggressive game characters than those who play older games with less salient models. Given the continual push by the gaming industry to provide players with more realistic experiences, the next generation of electronic games may have more potential to harm. A few studies have examined the role of virtual reality (VR) technology on game-induced aggression; VR technology strengthened aggressive outcomes among certain players compared to standard game technology. As games incorporate more realistic graphics and interfaces, such as ones allowing for real punching and kicking instead of just button pushing, they may place those players at higher risk due to the repeated rehearsal of actual violent behaviors.

—Paul Skalski and Stacy Fitzpatrick

See also Aggression, Electronic Games and; Electronic Games, Addiction to; Electronic Games, Age and; Electronic Games, Cognitive Scripts and; Electronic

Games, Gender and; Electronic Games, Violence in; General Aggression Model (GAM); Media Genre Preferences; Television Violence, Susceptibility to

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, HISTORY OF

The roots of modern electronic games can be traced to coin-operated electromechanical games, such as *Championship Fast Draw* from 1964. Elements like the high score and one- and two-player options were part of this early game. The first electronic game is possibly an interactive game similar to table tennis that was developed by William Higinbotham in 1958. It was played on an oscilloscope at Brookhaven Laboratory in Upton, New York. The gaming industry expanded greatly during the 1970s and 1980s, especially after the advent of the data cartridge and handheld games. Online gaming became increasingly popular in the 1990s. Today, the main driver of the development of electronic games is the growing power of the hardware, which makes games more and more realistic and complex.

MANY FATHERS

The first interactive computer game, *Space War,* was developed by Steve Russell, a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in 1961. Russell never filed for a copyright or a patent for his game. The next important step in the development of electronic entertainment was made by Ralph Baer. He worked for Sanders Association in New York, a military contractor. Between 1967 and 1972, Baer developed the first gaming machine, Odyssey, which was brought out by Magnavox. Odyssey had several games, including one that simulated ping-pong. Russell and Baer are known as the forgotten fathers of the electronic gaming business because their innovations brought them no economic success. At the time, computers were too expensive to be used as a gaming platform for *Space War,* and Magnavox did not have the marketing power to make Odyssey popular.

The first well-known figure in the electronic gaming business is Nolan Bushnell. His first exposure to electronic games was *Space War,* which he played in college. He developed a version of this game for coin-operated machines and gave it the name *Computer Space,* but it had no real success. He then founded Atari, which developed many legendary electronic games, such as *Pong,* the first big success on the market. Atari had to pay Magnavox for the licenses to *Pong* and *Space War.* Until 1974, *Pong* machines were in nearly every bar in the United States. A third of the machines were made by Atari and the rest by other companies through a license. In 1975, Atari released a consumer version of *Pong,* which sold 150,000 copies in the first year. This was the beginning of electronic home entertainment.

COMPETITION AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the following years, a number of new companies, games, and machines entered and left the market. A major innovation in these years was the data cartridge. After the advent of the cartridge, the game was no longer stored in the read-only memory of the gaming machine, which made it possible to buy new games for gaming machines. This changed the distribution structures of the industry; companies now had the ability to develop new games for the existing hardware and to work as developers and publishers of gaming software.

The next important steps in the development of the industry were, first, the start of handheld gaming in 1977, when Mattel brought LED-based games to the market, and second, Japan's entrance onto the electronic gaming scene when Nintendo released its first game in 1978. The industry grew considerably during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1980s, the increasing costs of development in hardware and software ushered in a phase of consolidation. As a result, the structure of the market changed; now, there were companies specializing in software, like Midway, and others specializing in the publishing process, like Electronic Arts, founded in 1982. The third group of companies, including General Consumer Electronics, which brought out the Vectrex in 1982, specialized in the development of hardware. Only a few companies, such as Atari and Nintendo, worked in more than one market. In 1989, Nintendo released the first Game Boy, which is the most successful gaming platform to date. Nintendo also sold more than 120 million consoles. The company was clearly a leader in the video game business, both in the handheld and home console markets. Popular consoles from Nintendo were the family computer Famicom, which was released in 1984 in Japan, and its American version, the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). Up to the mid-1990s, many companies brought out new platforms, but most of them were unsuccessful. With the growing number of PCs in households, the PC also became more and more important as a gaming platform. In 1993, Sega's Genesis System and Nintendo's Super NES dominated the console market.

Online gaming emerged during the late 1970s in Great Britain. A student, Roy Trubshaw, developed the first multi-user dungeon (MUD) at the University of Essex in 1978. In these multiplayer games, a group cooperates in the action of the game. The British students taking part in this initial network gaming played with students from the United States, using the early Internet and the ARPANET (the network developed by the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the U.S. Department of Defense). In the period between 1978 and 1985, about 100 people played in this first MUD. In the following years, many licenses of the game were sold. Between 1987 and 1999, the online service CompuServe used the license under the name British Legends. The following generation, MUD2, was developed by British Telecom. Both games are still available over the Internet. These first online games were text adventures. The next step in the development was graphics adventure. One of the first complex games was *Habitat,* developed by Lucas film in cooperation with Quantum Link. Licenses of this game were known as Worlds Away and Dreamscape. In the second half of the 1990s, popular games such as *Ultimo Online* were developed. The Internet boom caused a boom in online gaming, too, with the emergence of games involving complex worlds such as those in the Internet games *EverQuest* (Sony) or *Asheron's Call* (Microsoft)

NEW DOMINATORS OF THE MARKET

The domination of Sega and Nintendo ended in 1994 when the Sony's PlayStation came out. The first PlayStation was a huge success, surpassing both Nintendo and Sega in popularity. In the following years, Sega tried to stay in the hardware market but ultimately decided in 2001 to concentrate on software development. Dreamcast was the last console Sega released to the market. In competition with Sony, Nintendo began to specialize in children's games, whereas Sony targets older age groups. Today, the first PlayStation is still one of the pre-eminent gaming platforms. It was followed by the PlayStation 2 in 2000, which at the time was the most successful platform. In 2001, Microsoft became a competitor in the gaming scene with its console Xbox. In 2005 and 2006, the next generation of gaming machines entered the market. There is currently stiff competition, especially between Microsoft and Sony, as the two companies target their machines to the same age groups.

THE FUTURE OF GAMES

Modern game consoles are multimedia machines with enormous graphic power that can be used as multimedia devices for CDs, DVDs, the Internet, and so forth. Another area of technical development important for the games business is the increasing transmission rates of telecommunications networks. In the future, online gaming with PCs and consoles will be a very important part of the electronic game business. The number of users in the network gaming community on Microsoft's Xbox Live service measures in the millions, as does the number of players of the online game *Warcraft.*

—Hardy Dreier

See also Electronic Games, International; Electronic Games, Types of

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, INTERNATIONAL

Electronic games is the umbrella term for interactive games that are played on different kinds of electronic media. It includes all digital interactive games, whatever the platform they are played on. Electronic games come in an almost endless variety. They range from trivial puzzle games on the Internet that can be completed in less than a minute to highly realistic, three-dimensional (3-D) console games involving a sequence of complex actions that take dozens of hours to complete. In the short history of electronic gaming, both the production and the reception of electronic games became an international enterprise. Games are produced for a global market of mass entertainment. All over the world, games have attracted a wide audience, in particular children and (young) adolescents.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

An electronic game is an interactive, rule-governed system based on computer processing power. Rules are a fundamental feature that electronic games share with all other games. The outcomes of the interactions are variable because they depend on players' efforts; when players do not communicate with the game, it simply stops. As in other games, players care about the outcome of the game. Serious players want to win, after all, and feel disappointed when they lose. In electronic games, the structure of credit points teaches players immediately that some outcomes are positive and some negative.

INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION OF GAMES

Today, the development, production, and distribution of electronic games constitute a large industry involving many commercial partners. The process of game production begins in a development studio, where ideas are generated. If the studio succeeds in persuading a game publisher of the idea's value, an advance sum is allocated, and actual development begins. A design team of 30 to 40 writers, graphic designers, programmers, musicians, and quality testers works for about a year and a half on a new game. After approval of the final version, the game is mass-produced and distributed. The international market for electronic games is highly competitive. Estimates are that only about 5% of the games make a profit. However, these profits are huge in the case of blockbusters like *The Sims*, *Halo*, or *GTA: San Andreas*, but such profits are often needed to cover losses on less successful games.

Competition has led to concentration in the gaming industry on a level comparable with the movie and music industries. Many small, independent developers from the early days went out of business or were bought by other companies, as in the case of Maxis, the developer of *SimCity* and *The Sims*, which is now owned by Electronic Arts. Mergers between publishers and many takeovers further contributed to the industry's concentration. In this process, Electronic Arts became the world's largest game publisher.

The international game industry is dominated by publishers and developers from the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The American companies (e.g., Electronic Arts, Atari, Id Software) have the largest global market share. Japanese companies (e.g., Konami, Square Enid, Sega) are second in the world game market, but they dominate the local Japanese market. The British game industry (e.g., Adios Interactive, Sic games, Rockstar Games) produces successfully for the world market, but its volume is far smaller than the American and Japanese output. Developers and publishers in other countries are mostly small. French Besot is the exception: It is on the edge of the world's 10 largest game publishers.

The production of game consoles is dominated by Japanese companies. Sony is the undisputed market leader, with the PlayStation (1995) and the PlayStation 2 (2000). In response, Nintendo released the Nintendo64 in 1996 and the Game Cube in 2002. Nintendo is particularly strong in the handheld market. The Game

Boy (1989) and its sequels reached a massive audience. In 2004, they launched the Nintendo DS (Double Screen). Sony joined the competition for the mobile gamers in 2004 with the PlayStation Personal (PSP). Microsoft became the American competitor in the market with the launch of the Xbox in 2001. Both Microsoft and Nintendo will continue to attack Sony's dominant position with their new consoles in 2006 (Microsoft's Xbox 360 and Nintendo's Way). But Sony promises to have a new PlayStation (PS3) on the market in 2007.

The concentration of companies in the gaming industry is further underlined by the fact that the console manufacturers are large publishers of games as well. Nintendo is by far the oldest. It started in 1889 in Kyoto, Japan, with the publication of playing cards. Almost a century later, the company turned to electronic games. Microsoft first published games for the Windows PC and now also publishes for the Xbox. The games of Sony Computer Entertainment are part of a far larger Sony conglomerate that produces content for different media, including music and films.

Contemporary electronic games generally reflect the global dominance of Anglo-American culture. They feature the English language, even when their origin is Japanese. Large titles often are adapted for local contexts, offering a choice of languages for screen display, instructions, and sometimes dialogue. Online gaming on the Internet is a truly global enterprise. The hundreds of thousands of *EverQuest* gamers, a successful massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), reside in different countries.

Playing electronic games is embedded in a wider international game culture that manifests itself clearly on the Internet and in print media. The number of websites dedicated to gaming is uncountable. Many sites provide general news about electronic games, and the industry (e.g., www.IGN.com and www.gamespot.com). Other websites are dedicated to specific titles. They often have the character of fan sites. The postings on, for example, the sites of *Final Fantasy X-2* and *The Sims2* illustrate the international composition of the audiences of these games.

Game culture is also represented in the wide range of print media about gaming, notwithstanding the digital, electronic nature of games. The independent and critical British magazine *Edge* (1993) is one of the highbrow titles. *AmiPro* (United States, 1989) and *PC Gamer* (several local editions, 1994), aim at wider audiences. *Nintendo Power* is an example of a popular magazine published by the industry. Finally, game culture is represented by T–shirts, shoulder bags, and a variety of gadgets. This kind of merchandise often is part of cross-marketing initiatives. *Pokémon* obviously is one of the most successful titles and is distributed in the form of trading cards, TV shows, movies, and a number of electronic games.

—Jeroen Jansz

See also Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Games, History of; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Electronic Games, Types of

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, MORAL BEHAVIOR IN

In February 2002, a neo-Nazi media group advertised the release of *Ethnic Cleansing*, a computer game in which the objective is to kill "sub-humans" (read Blacks and Latinos) and their "masters," Jews. Although this game is an extreme example, it highlights the moral ambiguity that can be found in many electronic games—whether it is expressed through violence, sexism, racism, or anti-Semitism. The controversy surrounding the morality of video game content has been fueled by conflicting research findings regarding the association between game use and gamers' thoughts and behavior.

Trying to shield vulnerable members of society from "negative influences" has been a common response throughout civilization. Compared to adults, young children are less able to distinguish fantasy

from reality, making it particularly disturbing that many games feature fantasies of power and control. On the other hand, video games simply follow a tradition of violent entertainment that has long fascinated the masses, from violent spectacles in the ancient Roman Colosseum to the most violent Hollywood film. In fact, media are often said to reflect the values of a particular society rather than to create them. Video games are no exception, as they are now a major outlet for entertainment for most youth and adolescents in developed countries.

Most research has found a relation (modest in size) between exposure to violent electronic games and aggressive thoughts or behaviors (including a decrease in prosocial attitudes and behaviors). Often, the same data highlight the influence of players' pre-exposure characteristics (e.g., initial levels of aggression or attitudes). If there is any consensus emerging from this research, it is that violent video games may be one risk factor—second to real-world influences, such as bullying, family dysfunction, or drug abuse—that often contribute to "immoral" behavior. To date, no research has found that video games are a primary factor or that violent video game play could turn an otherwise normal child into an immoral individual.

Debates regarding the extent to which video games can impact one's sense of morality will continue to be muddled by an oversimplification of definitions (such as what constitutes moral behavior). Furthermore, inadequate research designs lead to misunderstandings regarding the type of aggression being considered—cognitions or behavior. Is thinking about violence as significant as behaving violently? Finally, the public's tendency to infer causality when the research design precludes such inferences overdramatizes the current literature. This does not suggest that society should not be concerned regarding the moral implications of video game content, especially since certain segments of society have begun to take advantage of improving technologies. For example, the military now uses popular shooting games as training for cadets, desensitizing them to the practice of killing. Extreme groups are also capitalizing on the popularity of video games to recruit new members and spread their messages. Although science has yet to confirm the causal impact of video games on individuals' moral cognitions and behaviors, video games are increasingly being used as vehicles for morally questionable behaviors.

—Liliana Rodriguez and Byron L. Zamboanga

See also Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Electronic Games, Addiction to; Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Games, High-Risk Players of; Electronic Games, Violence in; Media Effects; Television, Moral Messages on; Television, Morality and Identification With Characters on

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, POSITIVE USES OF

Until very recently, most reported effects of video games on children and adolescents centered on the alleged negative consequences. These included video game addiction, increased aggressiveness, and various medical and psychosocial effects. However, video games have been used innovatively in a wide variety of therapeutic and medical contexts for children and adolescents.

For instance, case studies using video game play as a form of occupational therapy or physiotherapy have been used for diverse groups of people, such as those with learning disabilities, physical handicaps, and emotional disturbances. Innovative uses include the use of video game playing as a respiratory muscle training aid for a young patient with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and another involving a 13-year-old boy with Erb's palsy who used video game playing as physiotherapy for arm injuries. The playing of video games has also been used in exercise programs to increase hand strength and facilitate the rehabilitation of upper-limb burn victims (using a variety of small to large joysticks). The use of video games in almost all these differing contexts capitalizes on a number of interrelated factors. One of the most important is the child's motivation to succeed. Furthermore, video games have advantages over traditional therapeutic methods that rely on passive, repetitive movements and painful limb manipulation, because video games divert attention from potential discomfort.

One of the reasons video game playing has been used in a number of therapeutic studies is because video games act as "distractor tasks." In one case study, an 8-year-old boy with neurodermatitis was unable to stop picking at his face (particularly his upper lip), and it was causing scarring. All conventional treatments had failed, so, to occupy his hands he was given a handheld video game to play (a Nintendo Game Boy). After just 2 weeks of video game playing, the affected area had healed. In addition to case studies such as this, a small number of U.S. studies have shown that video game playing can provide cognitive distraction for children who undergo chemotherapy for cancer. All these studies have reported that child patients reported less nausea prior to chemotherapy as a result of playing video games. This pain management technique utilizing video games has also been applied successfully to children undergoing treatment for sickle cell disease.

In randomized clinical trials, it has been reported that children and adolescents improved their self-care and significantly reduced their use of emergency clinical services after playing health education and disease management video games. The games have also been used extensively in comprehensive health promotions for adolescents in many areas (e.g., AIDS, alcohol, drugs, sexuality, and smoking).

It is clear that, in the right context, video games can have a positive therapeutic result on a large range of different subgroups. Video games have been shown to help children undergoing chemotherapy, children undergoing psychotherapy, children with particular emotional and behavioral problems (ADD, impulsivity, autism), and children with medical and health problems (Erb's palsy, muscular dystrophy, burns, strokes, and movement impairment).

—Mark D. Griffiths

See also Electronic Games, Addiction to; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; Internet Use, Positive Effects of

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, RATES OF USE OF

Playing electronic games on personal computers, game consoles, handheld devices, or the Internet is a relatively new but massively popular kind of mediated entertainment, in particular among young people. Boys are generally more active users than girls. The popularity of gaming has gone hand in hand with public expression of worries about game content. Rating systems are operative to inform parents and gamers about the potential harm caused by electronic games.

THE PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

The wide proliferation of electronic games is underlined by figures from the industry. In the United States, game producers reported a steady increase in sales during recent years, from $5.5 billion in 1998 to $7.3 billion in 2004. The picture in the United Kingdom is similar; sales of entertainment software increased from £85 billion in 2000 to £1.34 billion in 2004. The game industry is growing faster than the movie industry and thus has become a serious competitor. The gross market of electronic games grosses more than cinema box office receipts. The movie industry as a total still outperforms gaming, mainly as a result of ancillary revenues such as those from DVDs and sales to TV networks and cable companies.

The audience for electronic games has grown to a massive size since the early 1980s. Many early adopters have continued gaming to the present day. In the meantime, the game market diversified with an increasing number of titles for mature audiences. As a result, the mean age of gamers now approaches 30, a fact emphasized by the industry to underline the wide demographic of gamers and to contradict the common notion that games are designed for children. However, academic research shows that children and (young) adolescents between 8 and 18 years still are the largest audience. Gaming is an attractive pastime for them because it satisfies a variety of needs. The tasks at hand offer challenges at the appropriate level, often in a competitive context. The necessary efforts result in feelings of arousal, both when gamers succeed and when they are frustrated. When the task is completed or the battle is won, the gamer is rewarded

by a satisfying sense of control. In addition, electronic games offer ample opportunities to escape from ordinarily life by fantasizing about one's role in the virtual world. Finally, social needs are satisfied by playing together in real life or on the Internet.

Children and adolescents are genuine multitaskers who often combine games with online chatting and listening to music. It is therefore increasingly difficult to give exact figures about the time they devote to playing electronic games. A combination of industry statistics with data from academic research results in an average of 11 hours per week (about 1.5 per day). Boys are overrepresented among the gamers, and they generally spend far more time on their hobby than girls do.

Recent research reveals that game use is often genre specific. Mark Griffiths and his team found that players of massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) are well into their twenties. Other researchers found that first-person shooters (*Doom*), beat 'em ups (*Mortal Kombat*), and racing games (*Need for Speed*) are particularly preferred by young male adolescents. *The Sims* attained its status as the best-selling game ever because of its appeal to both genders and across a range of age groups.

RATING SYSTEMS

The increasing popularity of electronic games has not gone unnoticed. Critical observers publicly expressed their worries about this new pastime. Electronic games were criticized for the ubiquity of violence, the "mean world" they picture, and the stereotypes of women and ethnic minorities. In most countries, rating systems are used to inform parents and other media users about the suitability and possible harmful effects of games. In the United States, the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rates electronic games. Pictorials inform parents about the suitability for certain age levels: Early Childhood (3+), Everyone (6+), Everyone (10+), Teen (13+), Mature (17+), and Adults Only (18+). In addition, information is given about each game's content (e.g., cartoon violence, intense violence, animated blood, blood and gore, comic mischief, mature humor, mild language, strong language, and the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs). In Europe, since 2003 most countries have embraced a rating system called PEGI (Pan European Game Information), which was issued by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE). PEGI labels electronic games with six pictorials that inform their users about the possible harmful effects of "violence," "fear," "sex," "alcohol or drugs," "discrimination," and "bad language." In addition, the pictorials are related to five age categories: "Not suitable under three years," "six years," "twelve years," "sixteen years," and "eighteen years."

Some countries impose legal restrictions on certain games. In Australia, for example, the rating system does not have an 18+ category. Therefore, games with mature content are likely to be banned, as happened recently with *Manhunt*. In the case of *Duke Nukem* and *GTA: Vice City*, the Australian censor required modifications of game content. Another example is Germany. *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* was banned because of German laws prohibiting public displays of Nazism and the swastika. *Doom 1* and *Doom 2* were first banned, but later, modified versions were permitted with, for example, green blood instead of red.

The controversial games are only a part of the mass market of electronic games. The American industry claims that Mature games constitute 16% of the sales, Teen 30%, and Everyone 53%. The 2004 sales charts in the United States and the United Kingdom show a comparable pattern: Mature titles such as *GTA: San Andreas*, *Halo2*, and *Doom3* held top positions, but so did *The Sims2*, the sports games *Madden NFL 2005*, and *FIFA 2005*, and *Pokémon Fire Red*.

—*Jeroen Jansz*

See also Computer Use, Rates of; Electronic Games, Addiction to; Electronic Games, Age and; Electronic Games, Gender and; Electronic Games, History of; Electronic Games, Types of; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of

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ELECTRONIC GAMES, TYPES OF

Electronic games represent a dominant component of children and adolescents' media environment. They serve a variety of entertainment purposes, belong to the important issues of interpersonal communication among (male) peers, and have even established a youth culture and professional competitive structures (e.g., the annual World Cyber Games tournament). Contemporary electronic games are extremely diverse and offer various modes for players to use both alone and together with (many) others. The diversity of games is an important reason for their great attractiveness to children and adolescents, as it allows games to serve different developmental and social needs.

TECHNICAL PLATFORMS AND TERMS

One hardware platform for electronic games is the computer designed only for games, the so-called console. Equipped with a special computer chip to allow vivid audiovisual presentation, the console connects to a television set, which enables game playing in the living room. Sony (Playstation 3), Microsoft (Xbox 360), and Nintendo (Revolution) have dominated the market in 2006. Games played on consoles are typically called *video games.*

The second major platform for electronic games is the personal computer (PC). Special hardware is available for PCs to improve the richness of multimedia presentations. Games played on PCs are typically called *computer games*, although the terms *video game* and *computer game* are often used synonymously.

MOBILE GAMING DEVICES

In 1989, home electronics manufacturer Nintendo launched the first mobile gaming device. The Game Boy was essentially a portable, battery-run game console that allowed play at any location. For years, the Game Boy was extremely popular among children all over the world. More recently, improved models have been developed (Game Boy Advance, Micro) to include better graphics and more complex interactivity. In 2005, Sony launched the Playstation Portable, which is technically the most sophisticated mobile gaming console today; it allows movie viewing and other multimedia functions. In addition to portable consoles, which are primarily dedicated to gaming, electronic games are also available for other mobile devices, such as cell phones, personal digital assistants, and laptop computers (which can run the same games as stationary PCs). Early games designed for mobile playing display comparatively simple task structures (discussed shortly) and require significant dexterity. For instance, players of the *Mario* games for the Game Boy must make the protagonist jump from platform to platform ("jump and run") and must have good timing to avoid traps and obstacles. More recent mobile games are very similar to products sold for stationary use on home consoles and PCs.

OFFLINE AND ONLINE GAMES

Another important distinction in types of electronic games refers to their possible use of the Internet. Early electronic games were played by single individuals offline (single-player mode). Users would play with or against the "artificial intelligence" of the game software that controls dynamic forces in the game world, thus creating challenge and meaningful interaction. The conventional multiplayer mode of video game consoles connects up to four players offline—that is, players use the same console and sit in front of the same screen. PC-based games were eventually programmed to allow for multiplayer use within local area networks (LANs). More recently, PC-based as well as console-based electronic games have begun to include optional connectivity to other players via the Internet. Game manufacturers run Internet platforms to bring players together, hosting a large community of users and enabling multiplayer matches any time, anywhere. For some online games, teams ("clans") have emerged that compete against each other regularly.

The latest development in online gaming is the massively multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG), described by Elaine Chan and Peter Vorderer. These games are only used via the Internet and require a subscription (e.g., *World of Warcraft*). Players act in large fantasy worlds that represent all users as digital characters (*avatars*). Social interaction between players or avatars (e.g., trading, exchanging hints, making friends) is a major aspect of the entertainment value of such games. The huge realms to be explored and the "development" of the avatar (who gains experience and skills over time) also add to the playing motivation.

ELECTRONIC GAME GENRES

The industry (including game magazines) and academic researchers have developed a variety of genre classifications for electronic games. For instance, www.gamespot.com differentiates action, adventure, driving, puzzle, role-playing, simulation, sports, and strategy. Some widely used game type labels, discussed by Christoph Klimmt (2001), have emerged from those genre lists, such as *first-person shooter* (or *ego-shooter*), *real-time strategy,* and *racing game.* Although frequent players often agree about what kind of game is meant by a genre label, the labels do not meet scientific criteria for object description.

PROBLEMS WITH GENRE CLASSIFICATIONS

The major problem of the genre classifications used in game journals and many scientific articles is that various game properties are mixed implicitly to formulate type labels. For instance, the label *sports games* underlines the narrative dimension of electronic games, whereas *action* refers to the kind of task offered. However, the task structure of a sports game and an action game may be very similar. Other genre labels, such as *role-playing* and *adventure* are only comprehensive if one is experienced with some games that have been categorized this way.

A second problem is that the landscape of available games is changing extremely fast. Every season, new games are published that combine or merge different genres (e.g, *tactical shooters* or combined action and racing games such as *Grand Theft Auto,* which recently have even added components of role-playing games). Conventional game genre descriptions are therefore less informative when it comes to the latest developments in electronic games.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ELECTRONIC GAME CHARACTERIZATION

To address these issues in classification, Klimmt (2001) has suggested basing scientific categorizations of electronic games on dimensional descriptions rather than on fixed (and potentially insufficient) genre labels. According to his approach, electronic games should be portrayed on the dimensions of

- *Narrative framework* (e.g., science-fiction, medieval-fantasy, police story, World War II military), which includes the role that players occupy (e.g., starfighter, sorcerer, detective, soldier).
- *Dominant type of task,* which is most often a specific trade-off between coping with *complexity* (e.g., directing many military units, processing masses of economic information, planning ahead strategically) and acting under *time pressure* (e.g., fighting against fast-acting opponents, building military facilities before arrival of enemy forces, evading traps and obstacles).
- *Perspective of presentation,* which means the way the game world and players' actions are displayed (typical perspectives are "ego-views" of the players' avatars, a "following camera" view that centers the back of the avatar, and a bird's eye view that allows for overseeing multiple units in large geographical spaces, for instance, in strategy games); many games create specific perspectives or enable players to change between different optional perspectives.

CONCLUSION

The quickly changing landscape of genres impedes classifications that are valid over time. Therefore, researchers, teachers, and parents need to make themselves familiar with the diversity and complexity of electronic games in order to resolve the scientific, educational, and social challenges that these games have created for adults as well as for children and adolescents.

—Christoph Klimmt

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Computer Use, Socialization and; Electronic Games, History of; Electronic Games, International; Human-Computer Interaction (HCI); Interactive Media; Interactivity; Internet Use, Psychological Effects of; Media Entertainment; Media Genre Preferences; Multi-User Dungeons/Domains (MUDs); Youth Culture

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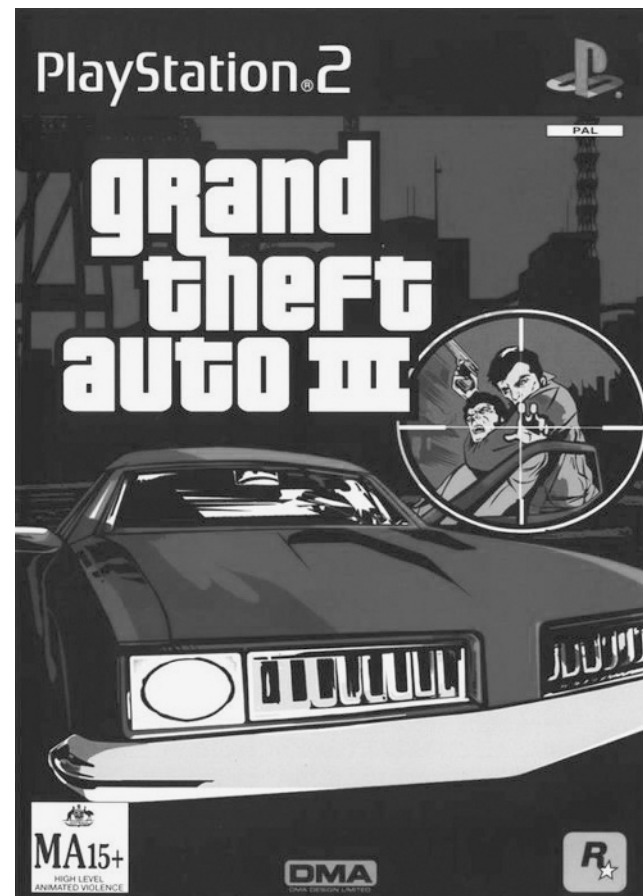
ELECTRONIC GAMES, VIOLENCE IN

In the past 10 years, the content of video games has come under greater media scrutiny as some of the top-selling games have become more graphically intense and violent. The names of these games are now familiar: *Mortal Kombat, Doom, Grand Theft Auto*, and others. Unlike television or film, much of this content remains a mystery to the generation who are too old to be interested in playing these games. Fortunately, a number of content analyses have been done to determine the amount of violence present in video games. Content analyses are particularly helpful for illuminating the types and level of violence found in these games.

Like film, video games come in a variety of genres that delimit each game's themes and content. These genres may be nonviolent (e.g., puzzle games, card games, educational games) or predominantly violent (e.g., shooters, fighters, action). Games in most genres contain a mixture of violent and nonviolent content (e.g., sports, strategy, driving, simulations, adventure, fantasy role playing). For example, sports genre games include boxing, hockey, and



The *Grand Theft Auto* series of electronic games features numerous forms of violence. Players assume the role of a carjacking criminal who can be made to perform a range of antisocial behaviors, from killing police to beating prostitutes to death after having off-screen sex with them. Since the appearance of the first title of the series in 1998, *Grand Theft Auto* has been immensely popular and profitable.

SOURCE: © 2006 Rockstar Games. All rights reserved.

football as well as tennis and golf. Some racing games focus on racing skills (e.g., *Need for Speed, Gran Turismo*), but others award points for running over pedestrians (e.g., *Carmageddon*) or allow players to shoot each other (e.g., *Crash Team Racing*). Although genre is useful for understanding the type of game play, genre designations do little to illuminate the content of games.

Because video games are a comparatively new medium, there are not as many content analyses of game content as there are of movies or television. One of the earlier studies, from 2001, found that 64% of a sample of games contained violence even though they had been rated E (Everyone) by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB). The same researchers published a subsequent study of all 396 games released up to April 2001 and found that 94% of games rated T (Teen) contained content descriptors by the ESRB for violence. Content analysis of a subsample of the T-rated games revealed that the same percentage actually contained violence, suggesting the content descriptors found on T-rated games are accurate.

Another set of studies used the National Television Violence Survey (NTVS) content coding scheme to look at the 60 most popular games across three platforms: Sony PlayStation, Nintendo N64, and Sega Dreamcast. The NTVS defines *media violence* as

> any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical force or the actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings. Violence also includes certain depictions of physically harmful consequences against an animate being that results from unseen violent means.

These studies coded both for the presence of violence and for the context in which the violence is found. Overall, they found that two thirds of games in the sample contained violence, with adult-rated games containing four times as much violence as games rated for children. Games rated for adults were more likely to feature human perpetrators and targets of violence, whereas games rated for children were more likely to contain robot perpetrators and targets of violence. Games rated for adults were also more likely to feature children as perpetrators and were more likely to feature women as both victims and perpetrators of violence than were games rated for children. Adult games contained more justified violence, repeated violence, blood and gore, and gun violence than children's games did. A follow-up study looked at context features of scenes from the first study that contained weapons. It was found that characters using guns in video games were most likely to be male, adult humans intent on protecting life. Game characters using guns were not angry or intent on retaliation or personal gain. Gun violence in games is highly lethal and contains abundant blood and gore. However, the depictions were judged by coders to be generally realistic.

The most comprehensive study of video game content examined 130 games produced in the first half of 2002 for five platforms, including the PlayStation2, Xbox, GameCube, Game Boy Advance, and the personal computer. They found that the game world is significantly more complex than it is often painted by the popular press. The three most common objectives in the game, accounting for about three quarters of games, were to overcome evil (28%); to gain points, as in sports games (23%); and to win a battle (20%). The vast majority of lead characters were male (71%), adult (63%), and of white European background. The largest character types were athletes (21%), followed by soldiers (12%) and drivers (9%). The character played is always the hero of the story and often has special abilities, such as martial arts skills (21%), superhuman powers (19%), or magic (18%). The most frequently used tools were handguns (23%), swords (21%), rifles (14%), and bombs (13%), although only 71% of games contained a character who used a tool.

Another avenue of content analysis has examined advertising messages used to promote the games in large-circulation video game magazines. One study examined 1,054 video game advertisements in regard to the portrayal of gender and violence in the images and text of the ads, as well as the representation of race and ethnicity, the genres of the games, the ratings and labels, and the use of advertising appeals, such as user identification. Results showed that more than half of the game ads contained violence, with an average of 2.5 weapons per ad. Males outnumbered females in the ads by more than three to one.

—John L. Sherry

See also Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Aggression, Electronic Games and; Electronic Games, Moral Behavior in; National Television Violence Study; Violence, Effects of

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ELECTRONIC MEDIA, CHILDREN'S USE OF

As long as there have been media, children's content has been offered. Never before, however, has such a vast array of electronic media been targeted toward young consumers. These media include traditional media (e.g., television, radio, and recorded music) as well as computer and wireless media (e.g., Internet, video and computer games, cell phones, personal digital assistants, and instant messaging). Children's use and comprehension of media content change significantly from preschool through adolescence. This entry reviews children's electronic media use in four age categories: young children (0 to 6 years), older children (7 to 10 years), young teens (11 to 14 years), and older teens (15 to 18 years).

Across these stages of childhood, several themes emerge about media use. First, it is clear that this generation of children lives in a media-saturated environment. Ninety percent or more of American homes own a television, a VCR, a radio, a CD player, and a telephone. Nearly two thirds of families with children now own computers and video game players. Second, higher percentages of children report that they own their own media hardware, much of which is stored in their bedrooms. Increasingly, a typical home includes multiple televisions, radios, and CD players. A third theme concerns the environment in which children use media. In many homes, media are on most of the day, competing for attention as family members interact and engage in work and play around the house. Finally, television and music still dominate the media mix in most children's lives. However, the Internet and new wireless technologies occupy a growing portion of children's time, changing the way children deal with information, family members, and their peers.

Studies by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the Annenberg Public Policy Center, and the Pew Internet and American Life Project all document a remarkably consistent picture of this media-laden culture. Children in those studies were reported to spend an average of 6½ hours per day with all media combined. Screen-based media (e.g., television, computers, video games, videos) account for about two thirds of that total. A typical child spends 25 hours with television every week. Those numbers increase when children live in single-parent, minority, or lower-income homes, or with less educated parents. The same is true for what researchers call a "TV-oriented" home, one in which the television is on most of the day (including mealtimes) and in which the parents have few rules for children's television use. This environment has been linked to heavy use of television, video games, and the Internet. These aggregated statistics, however, mask the shifts in children's media use from infancy through adolescence.

MEDIA USE BY YOUNG CHILDREN (0 TO 6 YEARS)

Beginning in the late 1990s, more media programming was targeted at toddlers (e.g., the PBS series *Teletubbies* and various collections of baby sing-along videos). In the limited data collected since, infant and toddler viewing numbers have surprised some observers. On average, they watch 2 hours of TV per day, about half of which is content suitable for adults and teens. Kaiser's surveys found that, on a typical

day, two thirds of toddlers use a screen medium (i.e., television, videos, or computers), and many use more than one per day. Over half of all infants' parents reported that their babies watch television (although with limited periods of sustained looks at the screen). Toddler's dominant media are recorded music, television, videos, and DVDs.

The third year of life constitutes a turning point in children's media use, according to researcher Daniel Anderson. Until that age, children sit facing their parents with their backs to the television, only occasionally looking at the screen while they play. Television-viewing toddlers, at around 30 months, turn toward the television set. Play continues, but with more frequent and sustained attention to the screen. Part of the reason for this change is that cognitive development enables children to understand more content. Undoubtedly, however, this increased attention is due to content that is produced for and marketed directly to children. Programmers are increasingly adept at using color, motion, and sound to capture young viewers' attention, even that of very young children.

During preschool (ages 4 to 6 years), significant increases occur in children's use of all media. As children reach the age of 4, most parents report a peak in viewing television (1 hour per day) and videos (about 45 minutes per day). Video game playing peaks at age 5 at just over 1 hour per day. Further, preschool children are becoming increasingly adept with computers; half or more preschool children can use a computer mouse, load a CD-ROM, and use a computer without a parent's presence. Nearly one third of them have visited websites for their favorite programs or have played with an ever-growing number of software titles designed to fit their computer and academic skills. Nickelodeon, for example, markets software from their popular *Blue's Clues* and *Dora the Explorer* shows that is designed to address reading and math skills.

All told, children up to 6 years old spend 2 hours a day with screen media, with smaller amounts of time on computers. Increased media use has been noted among several groups, including minority homes, families with less educated parents, children in heavy-viewing homes and those with televisions in their bedrooms. Interestingly, though, no clear patterns distinguish boys' media use from girls' use at this age. During these years, however, both music listening and reading (or being read to) remain very popular activities.

MEDIA USE BY OLDER CHILDREN (8 TO 10 YEARS)

Although the mix of media is much the same, average time with each medium increases dramatically during elementary school. Time with screen media alone doubles, and most of it is spent with television. Reports from the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Annenberg Public Policy center indicate that older children spend more then 3 hours a day with television, and nearly 90% of them watch on a typical day. They spend 1 hour per day with audio media, split between radio and recorded music. Equally significant increases occur in older children's use of computers and video games. Game playing peaks during this stage, with about 1 hour per day devoted to interactive game playing online or with video game systems (e.g., PlayStation or Xbox games). Although television remains the dominant medium for older children, increasing amounts of time are spread among other electronic outlets. As with younger viewers, average media time is higher in African American homes and in TV-oriented homes.

Kaiser estimates that older children spend in excess of 8 hours per day with media, although this assumes that children's media use is a linear, singular task. Cognitive development during these years enables children to begin monitoring more than one medium at a time. So, although 6½ hours a day are devoted to media use, a portion of this time is spent with multiple media simultaneously. The beginnings of multitasking surface as, for example, young users listen to music or the radio while playing video games. Starting here and continuing through adolescence, about 25% of children's media time is spent multitasking. Hence, most surveys have found that, after age 8, heavy users of one medium also tend to be heavy users of other media. A parallel here is the increasing array of media in older children's bedrooms, with higher percentages of children owning their own televisions, video game consoles, and computers.

MEDIA USE BY YOUNG TEENS (11 TO 14 YEARS)

Preadolescence and early adolescence mark another turning point in children's media use, particularly in the time they devote to various media. Television use

remains level, but young teens devote less time to home videos, moviegoing, and interactive games. By contrast, young teens' time with audio media (radio and recorded music) and computer use nearly double. Overall time with media, however, remains at about 6½ hours per day, including the time young teens spend multitasking with media. Race differences remain with this age group, and gender differences in the use of some media emerge and stabilize. Boys, for example, are more likely to play interactive games, whereas girls spend more time with audio media, especially recorded music.

Hence, at about the seventh grade (according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project), American children shift to using digital media. These averages of use of various media, however, can mask differences in the *way* children use media. Many of these differences emerge in early adolescence, particularly regarding the content children seek out. A good example is the time children spend with computers. During childhood, nearly all computer time is spent playing games, with slight amounts of time spent Web surfing. Beginning in adolescence, however, significant portions of computer time are devoted to visiting websites and instant messaging systems. Although some of this might be attributable to school-related computer use, a majority of teens' Web surfing is devoted to entertainment and sports sites (i.e., sites related to their other media use). In addition, peer relationships take up more media time as email and instant messaging become frequent modes of interpersonal media.

MEDIA USE BY OLDER TEENS (15 TO 18 YEARS)

Older teens' (ages 15 to 18) media use continues the patterns that surface in preadolescence. Total time with media for 15-to-18-year-olds, according to Kaiser's reports, is 6 hours 31 minutes. Television viewing drops significantly during this stage but remains well over 2 hours per day, more than any other medium. A close second, however, is the combined time that older teens spend with radio and recorded music. Interactive game playing also drops significantly during this stage, and time is instead devoted to computer use (especially online). As with their younger counterparts, older teens devote more time to Web surfing and instant messaging, but their time with email increases tremendously during high school. The result is a media mix in which three outlets (audio, television, and computer) make up nearly three quarters of older teens' media time. Overall, minority teens (African Americans and Hispanics) spend more time with TV, videos, and movies. These populations are also less likely to live in homes with computer and Internet access.

More than any other trend, media use by American teens reflects the coming changes in the digital media environment, according to studies done by the Pew Internet & American Life Project. Whereas about two thirds of adults use the Internet, nearly 9 in 10 teens report going online (half do so on a daily basis). As of 2005, half of teen Internet users had high-speed access, and nearly all of them devoted more time to instant messaging and cell phone use. Furthermore, older teens' online activities more closely mirror Web use by adults. Teen surfers, especially those with broadband access, are more likely to purchase products online as well as to seek out news and health information. Perhaps even more significant is the different media environment in which older teens live. Pew's survey indicates that 86% of teens report that most of their acquaintances use the Internet, and 84% of them own at least one personal digital medium (e.g., laptop computer, cell phone, or personal digital assistant). Media ownership continues to blossom, as three quarters of American teens reported owning their own desktop or laptop computers, nearly half possess cell phones, and a clear majority have television sets in their bedrooms.

—Ron Warren

See also Bedrooms, Media Use in; Computer Use, Rates of; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of; Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Music Listening, Uses of; Radio, Listeners' Age and Use of; Television, Child Variables and Use of

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EMAIL

An email (originally written *e-mail*, for "electronic mail") is a digitized message exchanged between two or more people using their networked computers. It is now possible to send an email not only to and from desktop computers but also to and from handheld computers, such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), and to and from mobile telephones. Today, a majority of young people in technologically developed countries use email, which can benefit them in their leisure time and in the pursuit of education and careers. However, children and adolescents who use email need both parental guidance and "email competence" to avoid the dangers inherent in email use.

STRUCTURE AND TYPOLOGY OF EMAILS

Email is a service enabling asynchronous communication to take place via computer: Emails go to a mail server before being collected by the recipient at a time of his or her choice, to be read and replied to. There are basically two different types of interface through which an email service can be used from a computer: either through the email program (known as the *email client*) installed on the computer and which downloads the mails from the server, or through a Web browser, to be found on the mail server (known as *webmail*). Webmail enables a user to look in his or her mailbox from any computer with Internet access. It is on the mail server that a user's individual email address is set. Some email addresses afford a clear identification of the user and his or her educational or work setting (an example would be karen.miller@stanford.edu); others afford anonymity (funny_elephant@yahoo.com).

There are usually five parts to an email:

Header: The header of an email serves to record the address of the sender, the address of the receiver, the route followed for transfer of the message, and the date and time of sending.

Subject line: The sender can use the subject line to indicate briefly to the recipient the content and function of the email.

Body: The content of the message is typed into the body of the email. (Technically, any signature or attachments are often also counted as the body of the email.)

Signature: It is possible to arrange for the automatic addition of a "signature" to the body of the email, containing the sender's professional role and postal address or even an epigram.

Attachment(s): It is possible to supplement the content of an email with one or more attachments, which may be documents, photographs, musical excerpts, or video clips in the form of digital files.

There are a variety of criteria for the classification of emails—for instance, their content (private or business) or their function (to inform, to entertain, or to cultivate a relationship). It is possible to differentiate three types of email according to the recipient group:

Interpersonal email: Here, the email is sent to one or more personal addressees (or at least to email addresses), as would be the case when a son sends greetings to his parents and his sister from on holiday.

Mailing list email: Here, the email is sent to a collective address, from which it is automatically distributed to a mailing list for the membership of the relevant group. An example would be a student writing to all the other students at her university via their mailing list.

Spam email (also known as *UBE, unsolicited bulk email*): Here, the email is sent indiscriminately by a person or organization to a large number of Internet users who have neither solicited nor requested such messages. Such emails may contain advertising material, rumors (these are often called *hoaxes*), computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, corrupt business proposals, or attempts to fish for passwords and other sensitive data. This is known also as *social hacking* or *phishing*.

PREVALENCE AND USE OF EMAIL

Email is by far the most used service on the Internet; the vast majority of Internet users read and write emails regularly. In 2004, a representative telephone survey of young Americans between the ages of 12 and 17 conducted by Amanda Lenhart, Mary Madden, and Paul Hitlin from the PEW Internet & American Life Project, revealed that 87% of those sampled were using the Internet and that, of these, 89% were

sending and receiving emails. The figures for girls as users of email (95%) were higher than for boys (84%), and they were also higher for young people at the upper end of the age range and those from families with higher socioeconomic status.

Interpersonal emails are the electronic counterpart of letters sent by post, which are referred to as *snail mail* in Internet slang. Regular postal mail has been partially replaced by emails in both the commercial and the private spheres because it is much quicker and cheaper to send emails rather than letters. Indeed, email services have caused the frequency and number of written messages exchanged to multiply. Whereas in the past it was customary to send private letters only a few times a year, on special occasions such as at holiday seasons, and for birthdays and anniversaries, many users of the Internet today send several private emails per day, even some to people they have met for the first time on the Internet. Email is an extension of the range of methods of telecommunication available (letters, telephone landlines, mobile telephones, etc.) and tends not to preclude face-to-face communication but to complement it. The sending of disagreeable messages is the only case in which people today tend to revert more frequently to digital delivery (an email or a text message via mobile phone) than to the spoken word, as studies by social psychologists such as Adam Joinson indicate.

Another representative telephone survey, conducted by Amanda Lenhart, Lee Rainie, and Oliver Lewis from the PEW Internet & American Life Project, revealed that young people in the United States tend to prefer email for communicating with adults (teachers, e.g., or relatives at a distance) and for the distribution of a large amount of information to groups, using mailing lists. For day-to-day exchanges with friends and peers, they tend to use instant messaging to organize a rendezvous, discuss homework, and flirt or talk over private matters together. On average, a young American between 12 and 17 years old will spend 10.3 hours a week in the company of friends outside school. A further 7.8 hours per week is spent in contact with friends via various media, among which telephone calls and instant messaging are dominant. Those children and young people who make more intensive use of email also exchange mobile phone text messages more frequently with their friends. In Japan, exchanging emails via mobile telephone is especially popular among young people. Besides contacting email recipients known to them from real life, children and young people also contact others by email—people whom they know only in the virtual world and not in their real identities, for example, because the email address is of the anonymous type. Many users of the Internet today possess more than one email address and use them according to the intention of the current communication.

OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY EMAIL

Email gives children and young people an opportunity to extend and intensify their social networks without too high an expenditure of time or money. For example, it is cheaper for them to use email instead of the telephone to manage their contact with relatives living far away or parents living separately. Because the Internet is so widely available in many countries with highly developed technology, young people can easily achieve contact with their peers. The many mailing lists and discussion forums, online games, dating platforms, and so on, provide opportunities to meet new people online both locally and internationally and to cultivate relationships with them so as to achieve friendship or even love affairs. Written exchanges may help reduce shyness and social anxiety, making it easier to meet people and also to have more open and relaxed relationships with friends one already has.

A wide selection of email advice services on health and sexuality is available free of charge to children and young people. There are also online mutual aid groups, in which children give each other support to deal with social or health-related problems, as described by researchers of social work such as Jennifer Tichon and Margaret Shapiro. In addition, teenagers find email valuable for communicating with potential training sites or workplaces, as when asking about practical placements (internships) by email, or sending off job applications in response to electronic job listings or recruitment notices. Particularly for those who live in rural districts, email can widen the radius of children's circles of acquaintance, but the extent to which they make use of it will depend on each child's individual capacities and on the general level of knowledge and training.

Children and young people profit from the provision of email services as part of secondary and higher education. In learning their native language, they can be asked to produce and respond to both snail mail letters and emails—and other forms of digital communication—so that they practice using different

styles with different media. During lessons in other languages, paired classes set up across international boundaries for email purposes can facilitate practical use of the foreign language, thereby increasing motivation. When students conduct a project by means of email with students at other schools (sometimes even internationally), they are effectively receiving training for future work as a "virtual team" in global enterprises. For specific school subjects, relevant mailing lists can be used as sources of information and platforms for discussion, so that the classroom is opened up to possible interaction with the outside world. With guidance, it is possible for pupils, for example, to use email to conduct research, perhaps by sending questions to experts. Within schools and universities, email and mailing lists can facilitate communication between teachers and learners on both the academic and the organizational front.

CHALLENGES OF EMAIL

For children and young people, a number of dangers are inherent in the use of email, which it is appropriate to counter first by guiding and accompanying them and then by teaching them how to develop email competence.

- Depending on their content, *spam emails* may be bearers of many dangers (among them computer virus transfer and the discovery of passwords). In lessons on media use, children and young people should be taught about the varieties of spam, how to recognize them by their email headers, and how to delete them automatically with the help of their email program.

- *Harassment by email* is made easier by the fact that anonymous email addresses are possible. Children and young people may figure among the perpetrators (e.g., in threatening fellow pupils in some way) or among the victims (e.g., in receiving sexualized emails from adults), and they should be made aware of the right and wrong uses of email.

- Although *email friendships* are a way to extend a young person's social network, they bring with them the risk of assumed identities and an illusory closeness. This is particularly true of love affairs by email; within a very short time, intense feeling can develop out of an intimate exchange of emails or online chat. First love for an increasing number of young people is cyberlove. It is thus appropriate to take the significance of these relationships to the young person seriously and to guide him or her in the direction of sensible handling of online relationships—for example, a gradual, safe transfer from email contact to telephone calls and then a face-to-face meeting.

- The phenomenon of *Internet dependence* is present if people use the Internet excessively over a long period with deleterious consequences, such as lack of sleep, reduction of contact with people in the real world, deteriorating academic performance, conflicts with family members, and so on. When children and adolescents are already suffering from low self-esteem, shyness, or loneliness, it can be all the more tempting to escape the anxieties associated with real-life contacts, replacing them with email or online chat and thereby being free both to control and to "improve" one's self-presentation, even to create a fictitious identity (Internet faking). Particular care should thus be taken that children and young people who find contact difficult should not be drawn into damaging dependence on email and online chat.

- There is a *threat to privacy* inherent in email in that communication is quite literally documented in digital form, even when it most intimate. Emails can be monitored by government agencies, email service providers, or parents. Privacy can also be breached when young people forward their friends' emails to third parties. Here again, young people are at risk of being not only victims but also perpetrators.

CONCLUSION

Although email use has many potential benefits, young email users need the guidance and company of parents and guardians as well as formal training in the development of email competence. Empirical studies should be the means of determining the skills and the knowledge that are indispensable to email competence. Such research must always take account of the state of the art in online technology, the state of maturation of the growing child at different ages, the different functions of email as a medium, and the different social contexts in which it is used.

—Nicola Döring

See also Chat Rooms; Social and Linguistic Processes in; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Contraceptive Information, Online; Email Pen Pals; Instant Messaging; Internet Relay Chat (IRC); Internet

Use, Positive Effects of; Internet Use, Psychological Effects of; Internet Use, Social; Loneliness; Mobile Telephones

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EMAIL PEN PALS

Today, nearly 90% of youth in the United States between the ages of 12 and 17 use the Internet, and about half of these users go online every day. Although instant messaging is extremely popular, email remains the most popular Internet application. Teenagers use email to talk about dating, friends, parents, where they live, sports, school, and other topics. These adolescents not only learn a great deal about each other but also improve their writing skills in the process of writing letters and emails back and forth. Email correspondence between pen pals is a growing part of electronic communication not only for American teens but for young people around the globe.

Indeed, quite a few researchers feel that personal communication not only helps us develop friendships but also is instrumental in learning a language and improving writing skills. Students can learn more effectively when they interact with others because they are able to express ideas and interpret oral and written messages within a meaningful and purposeful context. In doing so, they become familiar with language symbols and structures, which prepares them to make connections between what they know and what they are learning. One activity, pen pal communication, can fulfill these interactive aspects of language development. When two people communicate through writing, an environment for language use is created. This activity has been applied in a variety of educational settings and among students of different age and grade levels. The research findings demonstrate that pen pal writing increases motivation in literacy learning, improves language proficiency, strengthens writing and keyboarding skills, and enhances cultural awareness. In one study, three groups of university teacher-education students were paired with public school students to form pen pal (correspondence through written letters to the university students), e-pal (communication through email to the same teacher-education students), and control (writing to an imaginary correspondent, no response expected) groups. Those students who communicated via email showed the greatest improvement in their writing, as compared to traditional pen pal correspondence. Other schools should consider incorporating e-pal programs so their students can realize these benefits too.

A company called ePALS helps schools set up pen pal communications with students from around the world. ePALS Classroom Exchange is one of the leading providers of school safe email and collaborative technology. Founded in 1986 by John Irving and Tim DiScipio and headquartered in Easton, Connecticut, with offices in Ottawa, Ontario, ePALS is an online

environment in which teachers and students can safely connect with peers in an educational setting. Since it was introduced, ePALS Classroom Exchange has achieved a global reach, with 5.5 million students and teachers in over 191 countries. This reach was achieved by making the site available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Japanese, Arabic, and French. Because students can access potentially illegal content online either intentionally or inadvertently, ePALS introduced ePALS School Mail in 2001. This is a subscription-based, safe email option targeted to schools that allows students to use email in a protected, managed way. Even with safe email, the need to protect students from inappropriate material on the Internet remains and is addressed with the ePALS Safe Browser. The ePALS Safe Browser filters out inappropriate Web content and controls access to computer applications. It is a flexible product that allows school administrators to specify what is "inappropriate" and to create rules for different users, making it a better alternative to other browsers.

There are numerous stories documenting the success of email pen pal writing. For example, Paul McCarty describes a group of sixth graders at his school in Salt Lake City who were experiencing the excitement and wonder of developing pen pal relationships with a group of students from Russia in 1991. They corresponded daily via email for several months, until suddenly messages from their Russian pen pals stopped for several days. The students found out that the military revolution had disabled all channels of information in Russia, and there was no way for the students to connect with their Russian pen pals. The sixth graders were upset and wanted their pen pals to know that they were thinking about them. The American students discovered that the Russians could still receive news items at their school, so the sixth graders uploaded reports of international events relevant to the Soviet Union onto an electronic news service, hoping that their Russian pen pals would know that it was their American pen pals who were sending these news stories. After 4 days without communication, the people of the Soviet Union once again had access to regular Internet news channels and were able to communicate with the rest of the world. McCarty used this class project to study the effect of interacting with students from another country and found that pen pal communication enhanced the students' cultural awareness in addition to improving language literacy and writing skills.

In another study, Ping Liu examined the impact of a cross-cultural pen pal writing project between a group of second graders in the United States and one in China on students' learning experience and cross-cultural understanding. Liu found that the email correspondence between the two groups of second graders significantly impacted their school learning experience and enhanced cross-cultural understanding. The students were excited about the pen pal project, and this excitement fostered a desire to learn more about each other. They discovered some similarities between the two classes, such as the subjects they studied at school, the games they played outside, and their favorite sports. And they were amazed at some of the differences—for example, the Chinese class was large, with 65 children, and the Chinese children were responsible for keeping their classroom clean. As a result of this cross-cultural experience, the American second graders set up a program in which students picked up trash and cleaned up their classroom. The second graders also expressed a desire to understand Chinese, and they learned to write the Chinese characters for a variety of words, including those for *tree*, *stream*, and *sun*. These studies show that email pen pal communication is an integrated activity that has the potential to influence students' cognitive, linguistic, social, cultural, and affective development.

—Stephanie Lee Sargent

See also Computer Use, Socialization and; Computer Use in Schools; Email; Internet Use, Education and; Internet Use, Positive Effects of; Internet Use, Social; Online Relationships

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ENGAGED RESISTANCE

Engaged resistance is a term coined by a group of citizens, the Motherhood Project. It denotes the attempt to minimize the worst effects of mainstream or dominant culture through acts of individual or familial initiative, such as curtailing the number of hours the television is on or boycotting a particular vendor, combined with acts of civic engagement, such as collectively pressuring advertisers or petitioning corporate CEOs or public officials.

Popular culture in late-20th- and early-21st-century America has clearly become an increasingly potent force. Many observers, from parents to social critics, express worries about the power the media has gained over everyday life as well as the extent to which earlier forms of authority—-even the limited authority of individualism—have eroded. In her book *The Plug-In Drug,* for instance, Marie Winn expressed her dismay about the displacement of traditional modes of socialization by the mass media, arguing that the extensive viewing of television by children has a potentially disastrous effect on their psychological development. From Neil Postman to Jerry Mander, media critics have written with alarm of the effects of the media on the social world and inner functioning of children. Psychologists and others agree that everyday bonds with people and places play a crucial role in the formation of children's intellectual, creative, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Worries about the influence of new forms of media technology have been largely drowned out by promoters and beneficiaries of the high-tech boom of the 1990s and those rapt consumers eager to embrace what seems to them to be unstinting progress. Dissent has often taken the form of objections to overly explicit sexual and violent content in particular genres, from daytime and prime-time television programs to movies, music lyrics, and video games. For some groups and individuals, however, these objections are a launching pad for their broader resistance to the role of popular culture in socialization.

One of the most noted critics of explicit sexual and violent content in music lyrics was Tipper Gore, wife of Al Gore, vice president and then Democratic presidential nominee in 2000. In the mid-1980s, when her husband served as senator, Tipper Gore became aware of the widespread impropriety in popular culture forms aimed at children and put forth her views in testimony before Congress. In 1987, she published a book called *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society,* helping to set the groundwork for the uniform labeling system for music CDs instituted in 1990 by the Recording Industry of America. As a result, some CDs were rated "Parental Advisory—Explicit Lyrics." Gore and others drew attention to the inappropriate content of many television shows, video games, Internet sites, music videos, and advertisements, as well as music lyrics. In her book, she argued against censorship but in favor of "individual and community action" as a way to get across shared moral standards.

By the year 2000, it had become clear to many that the new rating systems for music CDs, like those previously inaugurated for movies, did little to diminish the overpowering effects of popular culture messages that often violated even minimal standards of decency. Parents, in particular, lamented the inescapability and callousness of the messages purveyed by the popular culture, messages they often thought were the opposite of what they tried to get across to their children through example and instruction. A chorus of objections arose from a number of different quarters. The Parents Television Council, a conservative Los Angeles-based group, lobbied for social responsibility on the part of the entertainment industry in part through complaints to the Federal Communications Commission. Another citizen action group was Action for Children's Television, founded in 1968. It achieved some limited success, through, for example, petitions to the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission advocating restrictions on advertising—that is, until the 1980s movement toward deregulation. Still other organizations—the National Coalition on Television Violence, the National Citizen Committee for Broadcasting, the Coalition for Better Television, to name just a few—launched public education campaigns, threatened boycotts of programs and producers purveying offensive content, and pressured advertisers to boycott particularly abhorrent programs.

The usual response to public outrage, however, was usually two-pronged: Some cited the First Amendment

as a rationale for an "anything goes" mentality, whereas others insisted that oversight of the images and messages to which youngsters are exposed is the sole responsibility of parents. Parents largely agreed that the lion's share of responsibility fell on their shoulders, and many turned to ratings systems and watchdog publications to help them determine what fare was acceptable. Some turned to character education and home schooling to counter what they saw as the sickly—even immoral—mainstream culture. In 1996, the Telecommunications Act mandated that televisions be equipped with a V-chip, a device that allows parents to program their sets to block certain content.

Although many parents are vigilant about what their own children hear and see, many argue that they are unable to monitor an entire culture. The omnipresence of media technologies and the popular culture make it nearly impossible to guard against their ill effects single-handedly. This inescapability of culture has prodded some groups to take an all-embracing and activist approach that combines individualistic and more collective resistance to the dominant entertainment style and content.

The Motherhood Project, led by Enola Aird of the Institute for American Values, is an organization that strives to counteract what it sees as the less-than-salutary messages and imagery rife in American popular culture. Including but transcending particular instances of offensive content, the organization's animus is to take issue with the exploitation and manipulation of children through marketing in general. The Motherhood Project presents a model of civic involvement over issues of shared public concern. It urges families and individuals to take responsibility and make changes, from reducing the time spent watching television and playing video games and the like, to muting advertisements when they come on, finding alternative forms of entertainment, and refusing to purchase clothing adorned with advertising logos. It also furthers collective protest, urging citizens to pressure or boycott companies purveying antisocial messages through their products or those that sponsor explicit sexual or violent programming. The Project encourages petitioning and letter-writing campaigns, lobbying, and the formation of "communities of resistance" and considers this multifaceted approach engaged resistance.

—Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn

See also Action for Children's Television (ACT); Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Adult Mediation Strategies; Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Advertising, Effects on Children; Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Advertising and; Federal Communications Commission, Deregulation of Children's Programming and; Federal Trade Commission (FTC); Media Effects; Media Exposure; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in; Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation

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ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION, INTERNATIONAL

Entertainment-education (E-E) is a communication strategy to bring about behavioral and social change. E-E is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, to create favorable attitudes, to shift social norms, and to change overt behavior. Its general purpose is to contribute to the process of directed social change, which can occur at the level of an individual, a community, or a society. *Takalani Sesame* and *Cuando Estamos Juntos* are examples of E-E—from South Africa and Latin America, respectively—directed to children and adolescents.

TAKALANI SESAME

Kami is a mustard-colored, furry, bear-like muppet sporting a mop of brown hair and a beaded blue vest.

She loves nature, telling stories, and playing with children. Kami's parents died when she was young, and she is HIV-positive. In 2002, Kami, the muppet, joined the cast of *Takalani Sesame,* South Africa's version of *Sesame Street,* to help 3-to-7-year-olds (and their families) understand HIV and AIDS, including ways to cope with it. *Takalani* means "be happy" in the local Venda language, and Kami's name is derived from the Tswana word for acceptance. In a world where HIV-positive children are often isolated, demonized, and victimized, Kami symbolizes a message of hope, possibility, and understanding. *Takalani Sesame* is one of the most popular television programs among children in South Africa.

CUANDO ESTEMOS JUNTOS AND *DÉTENTE*

In 1986, a unique communication project targeted to young people was launched in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Johns Hopkins University's Center for Communication Programs and local in-country partners produced two rock music songs, a highly popular genre among teenagers, promoting teenage sexual responsibility, *Cuando Estemos Juntos* (When We Are Together) and *Détente* (Wait). *Cuando Estemos Juntos* was number one on popular music charts within 6 weeks of its release in Mexico, and soon it was a top-rated song in 11 other Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. In *Cuando Estemos Juntos,* the teenage singers told their audience not to have sex. Using the song to communicate this message was a much more effective strategy than having a preachy message emanate from parents or priests. The typical Mexican radio station played *Cuando Estemos Juntos* about 14 times *per day* for the 4 months of the song's greatest popularity. *Détente* was a more typical hit song and was played "only" 5 times per day for several months. Thus, listeners were repeatedly exposed to the educational content of these rock music songs.

HOW E-E CONTRIBUTES TO SOCIAL CHANGE

The entertainment-education strategy contributes to social change in two ways. First, it can influence audience awareness, attitudes, and behavior toward a socially desirable end. Here, the anticipated effects are located in the individual audience members. One example is the Tanzanian radio soap opera, *Twende na Wakati* (Let's Go With the Times), which convinced several hundred thousand sexually active adults to adopt HIV prevention behaviors (such as using condoms and reducing their number of sexual partners). Second, the E-E strategy can influence the audience's external environment to help create the necessary conditions for social change at the system level. Here, the major effects are located in the interpersonal and sociopolitical spheres of the audience's external environment. The entertainment-education media can serve as social mobilizer, advocate, or agenda-setter, influencing public and policy initiatives in socially desirable directions. For instance, the popular South African television series *Soul City* mobilized community action and women's marches, and it speeded passage of domestic violence legislation in South Africa through media, public, and policy advocacy.

FORMATIVE, PROCESS, AND SUMMATIVE RESEARCH IN E-E

E-E projects benefit from formative, process, and summative research. Formative evaluation research is conducted with the intended audience in order to design the entertainment-education intervention.

Formative research is conducted while an activity, process, or system is being developed or is ongoing, in order to improve its effectiveness. Research-based information about the characteristics, needs, and preferences of a target audience sharpens the design of entertainment-education. For instance, in the South African E-E series *Soul Buddyz,* directed to children 8 to 12 years old and their families, messages about self-esteem were built around ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic lines. Formative research showed that children who were "different" in any way were teased and bullied by others. The self-esteem message was continuously conveyed through the composition of the *Soul Buddyz* friendship group, which included people from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds with different abilities but who were friends and supportive and respectful of each other.

Entertainment-education interventions are further strengthened through such *process evaluation activities* as the analysis of audience letters, monitoring of clinic data (to track family planning adoption, for example), and content analysis of the entertainment-education messages (to determine whether scripts are consistent with desired educational goals). Feedback can thus be provided in a timely manner to entertainment-education media producers for appropriate mid-course corrections.

Summative evaluation research measures the effects of the entertainment-education campaign on audience behavior. For example, an E-E radio soap opera *Tinka Tinka Sukh* (Happiness Lies in Small Pleasures), which promoted the education of girls in Hindi-speaking north India, was evaluated by a field experiment (using pre- and post-treatment and control audience surveys), content analysis of the episodes and of listeners' letters, and a case study of one village in which the program had strong effects.

E-E'S PROMISE AND DILEMMAS

By 2005, several hundred E-E interventions have been implemented, mainly for health-related educational issues, and many directed at children and young people, especially in the developing countries of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Research evaluations of the E-E strategy suggest that such programs have the potential to engage audience members, earn high audience ratings, and also serve their social development goals.

However, the use of the E-E strategy necessarily involves ethical dilemmas. For instance, is it right to use the mass media as a persuasive tool of social change? Also, who decides what represents a desirable prosocial behavior? It might be hard to argue against the educational value of E-E programs that promote HIV prevention; however, for certain other issues, such as promotion of condom use among youth, arguments can be made for different positions. Some may argue for the value of protecting teenagers from sexually transmitted diseases, yet others may argue that free availability of condoms promotes teenage promiscuity.

—Arvind Singhal

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; HIV/AIDS, Media Prevention Programs and; Media Effects, Models of; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Television, Prosocial Content in

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ENTERTAINMENT-EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Entertainment-education (E-E) is the planned use of entertainment media to communicate prosocial messages to mass audiences. It differs from standard informational programming and public service announcements in that it is typically higher in entertainment value. Unlike international efforts in E-E, in which media programs are often written and produced with the prosocial message in mind, in the United States most E-E messages are embedded in existing television programs. Thus, the message is developed to fit into the existing narrative. Although it has been successfully employed in international efforts, E-E programs have not been used widely in the United States. When they have been used, they have been used to educate the general public on a wide array of issues, such as children's immunization, adolescents' sexual health, and literacy.

Characteristics of the American media market, such as media saturation and the for-profit industry, pose unique problems for E-E efforts. In international efforts, there is little competition for the audience's attention because there are so few media markets. In contrast, in the United States an individual television program has much competition. Many popular TV programs are watched by fewer than 20% of American households. Further, the American media industry is a highly profitable business, and some scholars have argued that campaign designers may find it difficult to convince the industry to include prosocial messages that have the potential to lower entertainment value.

Despite these obstacles, most scholars agree that E-E programs have existed in the United States since 1969. Three early efforts of E-E deserve mention: *Sesame Street, Happy Days,* and the Harvard Alcohol Project's Designated Driver Campaign. *Sesame Street*,

a popular children's education program, is widely recognized as the first E-E television program in the United States. Developed in 1969 by the Children's Television Workshop, *Sesame Street* has been found to affect children's knowledge and behavior. Specifically, children who watch *Sesame Street* are more likely to spend time reading than those children who do not watch *Sesame Street.* In the 1970s, *Happy Days* was successful in disseminating a prosocial message through one of its episodes. In the episode, one of the lead characters, Fonzie, went to the library and ended up getting a library card even though his original intent was to pick up girls. After the show was aired, library card ownership increased. In 1988, the Harvard Alcohol Project partnered with the media industry to promote the use of designated drivers in one of the first coordinated E-E campaigns in the United States. The campaign included spots on television programs watched by adolescents, such as the hit TV sitcom *The Cosby Show.* The project's campaign is credited with being a catalyst in changing social norms for drinking and driving.

In more recent years, national organizations such as Hollywood, Health and Society, the Media Project, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (NCPTP) have worked with television writers and producers to include health messages in television programs popular among adolescents. These organizations also provide scriptwriters and producers with tip sheets on coverage of health issues via their Web pages. Healthy messages have been embedded in such popular programs as *ER*, *Friends, Dawson's Creek,* and *Everwood* and in teen magazines such as *Teen People.* For example, the NCPTP worked with the writers and creators of *Everwood* to include a teen pregnancy story line for one of the show's lead characters.

E-E programs have been found to be effective in the United States, although scholarly work evaluating such programs is rare. The popular television program *Friends* included a sexual health message that focused on the ineffectiveness of condoms, in which one of the main characters repeated that condoms are "only 97% effective." A study conducted by Rebecca Collins and her colleagues found that the majority of the young-adult viewers (65%) of this *Friends* episode were more likely to remember the sexual health message and 6 months later were more likely to accurately report the effectiveness of condoms than young adults who did not watch the program.

Many mass communication theories are relevant to the study of entertainment-education efforts, but two theories are especially relevant. Most scholars analyzing E-E effects base their analysis in theories of media effects, such as social cognitive theory. According to social cognitive theory, the more a person identifies and relates to a character on television, the more likely the person is to model that character's behavior. The theory of parasocial interaction, which posits that individuals build quasi-interpersonal relationships with characters in the media, is also relevant. According to this theory, a viewer is more likely to remember and appropriate the behavior modeled in a prosocial message if the viewer has formed an attachment to the character.

—Stacey J. T. Hust

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Designated Driver Advertising Campaigns; Educational Television, Effects of; Entertainment-Education, International; HIV/AIDS, Media Prevention Programs and; Media Effects, Models of; National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Television, Prosocial Content and

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ETHNICITY, RACE, AND MEDIA

Children and adolescents can learn about diverse racial and ethnic groups and their cultures from media presentations. Most media provide stereotypic images of groups other than European Americans. There are infrequent examples of positive interaction between members of diverse groups. Media portrayals influence children's racial and ethnic attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions about all racial/ethnic groups, including their own. Although mass media stereotypes recur, the media have the potential to provide content that could promote increased cultural knowledge, positive racial attitudes, and appropriate models for how to live, work, and play together in a diverse world.

African, Asian, European, Hispanic, and Native Americans have unique histories of inclusion or exclusion from various aspects of American society. Mass media perpetuate messages about the role of race and ethnicity in society by offering vicarious experiences with diverse individuals who may otherwise be unavailable to the viewers. Because mass media are powerful and ever-present in the lives of youth, adults wonder about the extent to which media contribute to the maintenance of stereotypes and prejudice or, conversely, the extent to which they provide children and adolescents with important, positive messages about living in a multicultural society. The influence of mass media may be more potent as many youth continue to live in neighborhoods and attend schools that are racially and ethnically segregated. Since the 1920s, researchers have examined the extent to which diverse racial/ethnic groups were (1) *recognized by* or included in mass media and (2) *respected* by the roles and portrayals assigned to them.

EXPOSURE TO DIVERSE MEDIA CONTENT

Racial and ethnic characteristics influence how youth utilize media. African, Hispanic, and Native American youth watch more television than do European Americans. Hispanic youth watch more cartoons, whereas European American youth watch more educational television. Asian American youth have the highest Internet usage, and African American teens play more video games. Within each medium, children and adolescents expose themselves to different diets of racial and ethnic content. For example, African and European American youth have greater preferences for music and television that feature same-race characters. In a study of favorite television programs, white teens preferred homogeneous, same-race television programs, and black teens preferred programs that included African American characters. The viewing habits of the two groups were so different that few European Americans watched any of the 10 favorite shows of the African Americans, and vice versa.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC PORTRAYALS IN MEDIA

Visible racial and ethnic groups are underrepresented and stereotyped in mass media. They are segregated in specific types of content, on specific days, and even on specific media outlets. For example, Hispanic Americans are limited to situation comedies and reality crime shows. African Americans are largely confined to the lower-rated networks such as UPN, same-race situation comedies, and the nights of lightest viewing, Monday and Friday. The racial segregation is so specific that a study of Saturday-morning children's programming showed no examples of minority females on three of the four major networks. Generally, advertising and educational programs provide greater recognition for diverse groups than do prime-time television programs. Despite the success of individual celebrities, currently there continues to be no example of a prime-time, noncomedy television program that features a lead actor who is not European American.

Portrayals of diverse groups are limited, with visible racial and ethnic minorities presented as more homogeneous and less differentiated than European American characters. Repeatedly, whites have a wider range of roles and portrayals across a range of media content, including all types of advertising. For example, although African, European, and Latina/o Americans are portrayed as police officers and court officials in crime and justice television programs, including reality-based police shows, African Americans are more likely to appear as perpetrators of crime in local and network news programming. A similar pattern of limited portrayals relying on racial and ethnic stereotypes can be found in media as diverse as cyberspace websites, Disney animated feature-length films, and magazines.

Relationships across racial groups on television are infrequent and generally do not include close, intimate, and positive relationships between European Americans and members of other groups. There is greater cross-racial interaction on children's and educational television; the interactions are positive or neutral. However, issues of race are rarely discussed. Cross-racial interaction typically includes whites, a fact that suggests that groups of nonwhites alone do not work or are not important enough to be recognized. In fact, televised youth portrayals are more often associated with conflict between members of the same race than between members of different racial groups. The Internet, with the proliferation of content that focuses on racial and religious hatred, provides disturbing messages that interracial interaction is undesirable and should be avoided.

EFFECTS OF DIVERSITY IN THE MEDIA

There is no doubt that children learn about people from television. Children of all races agree that on television there are racial differences in how roles are presented, with European American characters more likely to appear with positive characteristics and members of other groups more likely to have negative characteristics. Children of all races will select diverse individuals as people they admire, although white children are more likely to choose same-race television characters and celebrities as their favorites. Generally, youth evaluate portrayals of same-race characters as less realistic than portrayals of different race groups. Children with prior personal experience with people from other groups evaluate portrayals as less realistic than children without diversity experiences.

Media presentations can affect attitudes toward diverse groups. Negative racial portrayals are linked to negative racial attitudes, and positive portrayals are associated with more positive attitudes. For African Americans, the relationship between the nature of black portrayals and subsequent attitudes is more complex, in part because of differences in racial identification and prior experience. These variables can result in diverse interpretations of the racial/ethnic content offered, making prediction of the effect on same-race attitudes difficult. Racially diverse models have the potential to influence behaviors, as youth will observe and imitate both same-race and cross-race models. When examples of positive interracial interaction in educational television were provided, children's interest in cross-racial friendships was increased, and positive feelings toward diverse groups were enhanced. Additionally, planned media interventions to improve race relations, including episodes from *Sesame Street* and from the anti-racism video series *Different and the Same,* indicate the potential of media to help children effectively interact with people from diverse racial and ethnic groups.

—Sherryl Browne Graves

See also Advertising, Ethnicity/Race in; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Ethnicity/Race, Stereotyping; Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in

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ETHNICITY/RACE, MEDIA EFFECTS ON IDENTITY

Racial and ethnic minorities in the United States experience prejudice and discrimination, and these experiences affect how children and adolescents think about themselves. Despite the myth of a the United States as a "melting pot" in which the identities of diverse racial and ethnic groups are hypothesized to dissolve into single American identity, children and adolescents define their sense of self in relationship to their ethnic/racial group membership. Because mass media reflect the values of the larger society and offer examples of what it means to be an adolescent with particular social characteristics, researchers have

studied how mass media influence the development of racial or ethnic identity.

DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY

Identity, a multidimensional sense of personhood that is shaped by internal and external factors, provides the sense of uniqueness that every human being experiences. According to Erik Erikson, identity formation is a developmental task in which the adolescents are required to decide who they are, what roles they will play in the world of work, and how they will engage in intimate relationships within specific cultural and social forces. Because identity development occurs in relationship to others and in response to others' reactions to the individual's thoughts and actions, media has the potential, over the course of the developmental cycle, to affect identity development.

According to Margaret Spencer, racial or ethnic identity is multidimensional and includes both a sense of self and identification with a reference group. Because these two components can operate independently, racial identity—one's attachment to and feelings about a group—is separate from one's sense of self and self-worth. Racial identity can take different forms: (1) An individual may identify *as* a member of a group; (2) an individual may identify *with* members of a group; or (3) others may *assign* an individual to a group, although not all three options are equally available to members of specific racial or ethnic groups. William Cross and others suggest that racial identity may develop over time and may change its content as an individual reacts to societal messages about and experiences with the role of the reference group in the larger society. The importance of racial/ethnic identity is influenced by one's context, including the racial/ethnic composition of specific settings and the attitudes of the participants in those settings. In particular, media are important sources for identity development, as they present examples of "hip" teen models and redundant messages about racial groups that may influence a child's values, behaviors, and expectations.

MEDIA EFFECTS ON RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY

Youth of all groups are exposed to recurring, consistent, and normalized stereotypes of visible racial and ethnic minority groups in the media. Although adolescent consumption of this content varies, coviewing with peers helps to solidify media selections and amplify the differences in media choices between teen groups. For example, African American and European American youth have a strong preference for media featuring people of the same race, with African American girls selecting more same-race music and European American girls selecting more same-race television programs. Despite these preferences, adolescents are exposed to some media featuring racially diverse casts.

Racial identification can affect the selection of media content leading, for example, African American teens with strong racial identities to be more likely to select media featuring same-race participants than are African American teens with weak racial identities. As teens in general use media to help bolster their social identities, it is not surprising that African American and Korean American teens, for example, report using the media to help form their racial/ethnic identity. For some, like African American teens, the tendency to pick same-race content is not dependent on the nature of the television. Because the reference groups of most adolescents of color are undervalued by society, there are three possible reactions: (1) If they accept group membership as a personal fault, media presentations may negatively influence racial identity; (2) if they are proud of their group and reject the majority culture, media may strengthen their positive identification with media featuring their reference group; or (3) if they deny group membership, they may avoid exposure to media featuring the group. Although these alternatives are available to African American youth, the possibilities for diverse media sources to support positive identity development for Asian American, Latina/o, and Native American youth are severely limited by their restricted inclusion on the dominant media. According to Federico Subervi-Velez, Latina/os have additional media choices to support their ethnic identity: They can choose to engage with Spanish-language television developed by Latin American sources. In fact, little is known about the role of the media in racial and ethnic identity development in adolescents.

Research with children suggests that television can affect the racial/ethnic identity of children and that children's racial/ethnic identity affects their television use. Television programs such as *Sesame Street* and the multiethnic animated series *Superfriends* had positive effects on racial identification such that children had

higher levels of identification with same-race characters and recalled more information about the cultural features and activities of same-race characters than they did for different-race characters. There is evidence that, for African American teen girls with strong racial identities, exposure to mainstream television does not negatively affect body image. In fact, exposure to black programs was associated with better body image, contrary to the effects of this medium on white teen girls. Similarly, African American adolescents are more likely to rate same-race characters as more similar to themselves than other-race television characters. There is much less information about the impact of racially diverse media on other racial/ethnic groups. In research on smoking cessation, for example, Hispanic teens who watched more ethnic programming, a sign of strong ethnic identification, exhibited decreased ability to make friends without using tobacco. This result is difficult to explain but provides a bit of information on the relationship between media, race/ethnicity, and identity. Despite limited research on media effects on racial/ethnic identity, there is ample evidence that media contribute in important ways to the development of gender identity, sexual behavior, and occupational choices.

—Sherryl Browne Graves

See also Advertising, Ethnicity/Race in; Ethnicity, Race, and Media

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ETHNICITY/RACE, STEREOTYPING

How individuals from different racial and ethnic groups are portrayed in the media has generated considerable scholarly attention, with research over the decades reporting a great deal of variability—in the ways that portrayals have changed over time and in the ways different ethnic and racial groups tend to be characterized. In general, although research suggests that some stereotypes are less common than has been typical in the past, numerous stereotypes continue to exist in a variety of media content, including content aimed specifically at children.

PORTRAYALS OF RACE/ETHNICITY

The inclusion of people of color in media programming has undergone dramatic changes over the decades; some racial groups now appear in numbers that approximate population percentages, yet other groups continue to be largely nonexistent in the television landscape. For example, Robert Kubey's content analysis of characters on network and cable stations found that white characters accounted for 81% of all appearances, African Americans, 11%, and Latina/os, 7%. Asian and American Indian characters continue to be vastly underrepresented.

Similar patterns in portrayals are observed in media content directed specifically to children, with many cartoons featuring few or no minority characters. These patterns are also observed in other types of content, including comic strips, commercials aired during children's programming, and video games, in which minority characters are atypical or are included as only minor characters or in background roles.

In addition to noting the frequency of minority portrayals, researchers have examined demographic characteristics, behaviors, and traits associated with depictions of race. For example, earlier research reported that entertainment television tended to

characterize minorities as impoverished, uneducated, and lower class. However, more recent content analyses have reported fewer differences between black and white characters in terms of portrayed income. In addition, other researchers have suggested that Asian characters now tend to be portrayed as "model minorities," working in such fields as law, education, and health care. Despite these findings for entertainment, however, content analyses of news portrayals have reported that African Americans continue to be disproportionately associated with poverty.

The distinction between entertainment and news programming is also evident in terms of portrayals of crime. That is, whereas content analyses of fictional programming have tended to report small or nonexistent differences in crime involvement or antisocial behaviors between different minority groups, analyses of news programs or "reality-based" police programming report that minorities (and particularly African Americans) are disproportionately shown as criminal suspects and are portrayed in ways that imply that they are particularly dangerous or aggressive.

Surprisingly little research has explored the nature of stereotypical portrayals of child characters or of programming content aimed specifically at child audiences. Arguably, the greatest research attention in this regard has focused on commercials and advertising, with recent analyses suggesting that this content continues to feature stereotypical portrayals. For example, Meredith Li-Vollmer's analysis of television commercials targeted to children reported that white characters were more likely than minorities to be shown as professionals; African Americans as service workers, athletes, or musicians; Asian characters as associated with high-tech products; and Latina/os as workers in restaurants. Of the little research that has been conducted on entertainment programming specifically, one general conclusion is that, when minority characters are prominently featured, they tend to be on shows that feature casts of primarily a single race (e.g., *Fat Albert*). One implication of this pattern is that media content rarely features interactions between white and minority characters.

One notable exception to the stereotypical portrayals found in commercial and programming content aimed at children is entertainment-education programming. For example, *Sesame Street* features a diverse cast of characters, including both adults and children. In addition, this program includes specific segments designed to teach children about a variety of cultures, races, and languages associated with racial and cultural groups that are infrequently seen in other types of television content (e.g., American Indians).

EFFECTS OF PORTRAYALS

Research on the ways in which media stereotypes may affect viewers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors has tended to focus on harmful outcomes, although some research (particularly with children's programming) has explored the idea that positive portrayals may hold the potential to increase favorable attitudes among whites toward ethnic minorities. With this in mind, however, the majority of social scientific studies suggest that media stereotyping can result in increases in stereotypical beliefs, can affect judgments of individuals in ways that reflect prejudicial attitudes, and can prime stereotypical thoughts. For example, studies suggest that heavy viewing of programs such as crime shows and news is associated with beliefs that African Americans are more impoverished and more heavily involved in crime than are whites. Similarly, experimental research has demonstrated that viewing media stereotypes can "prime" or "activate" stereotypical thoughts that, in turn, affect not only judgments or perceptions of subsequently viewed media but also judgments of individuals encountered after viewing. Finally, research on viewers' selection and interpretation of media content has reported a tendency for viewers to perceive portrayals of race as consistent with their existing stereotypes.

In contrast to these harmful effects of media stereotyping, research on prosocial content suggests that positive and inclusive media portrayals have the potential to result in beneficial outcomes, particularly among children. For example, studies of the effects of educational programming such as *Sesame Street* suggest that the viewing of such programming not only can increase favorable feelings toward minority groups among white viewers but also can increase feelings of confidence and pride among minority viewers.

The combination of findings on the nature of media stereotypes and research on the effects of stereotypical images is cause for concern. However, as the media landscape slowly changes to reflect more equitable and favorable images, and as researchers continue to explore ways to harness and increase prosocial aspects of media viewing, perhaps the current bleak situation

will become one in which racial diversity is celebrated both in the media and among its viewers.

—Mary Beth Oliver and Jinhee Kim

See also African Americans, Media Effects on; African Americans, Media Images of; African Americans, Media Use by; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Latin America, Media Use in; Latina/os, Media Effects on; Latina/os, Media Images of; Latina/os, Media Use by

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EUROPE, MEDIA USE IN

Because the name *Europe* refers to different geographical, cultural, and political spaces, statistics on European media use also refer to varying regions. Reference is often made to the European Union (EU) and its current 25 member states: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Focusing on this group of countries makes it easier to describe the European media landscape because these states have agreed on some common principles regarding their media systems, and there are more advanced comparative statistics on this level. Because of their close cultural, political, and economic relationships to the EU, Norway and Switzerland are often included in European statistics. In addition, there are many countries in eastern and southeastern Europe that belong to the wider understanding of Europe; these include Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, and Turkey.

TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA IN EUROPE

Despite recent trends of globalization and European integration, the European media landscape is still divided along national and cultural boundaries. One important reason for the continuing predominance of national or even regional and local media is the plurality of languages in Europe. Even among the 25 member states of the European Union, there are 19 different national languages and an additional number of regional languages. On the basis of the numbers of native speakers, German, English, French, Italian, and Spanish are the most important languages. For international communication, English is by far the most important language; around 50% of the people within the European Union are able to understand English. However, this does not mean that these people use English-language media. Thus, in general, the European media landscape is strictly divided by language barriers.

Beyond this general rule, only a few European media outlets target transnational European audiences. In television, the most important examples are

Eurosport, a commercial sports channel, Euronews, an initiative by several public broadcasters to offer a transnational news channel, and the commercial music television station MTV, which offers several versions of its programming for different parts of Europe. MTV has been particularly important for young people in providing current pop music, stories about famous pop idols, and innovative entertainment formats for young people.

Although dedicated transnational media do not play a significant role in Europe, there are other ways to distribute international content to children and young people. The most important one is international pop music as distributed by music television, by hit radio stations, and via the Internet. In this respect, European children and adolescents tend to follow international trends; with the exception of some outstanding stars, they do not prefer the respective national music. The other kinds of international content are movies, television series, and television entertainment programs. As throughout the world, a large amount of programming on European television and movie theaters is imported from the United States; according to the European Audiovisual Observatory, U.S. imports constituted about two thirds of the overall imports of television fiction. Thus, for example, German or French viewers are much more likely to see American movies or series than Spanish or British movies or series. This general rule is also true for children's programs: All European children know Disney and other American productions; more recently, the globally distributed Japanese anime formats like *Pokémon* and *Dragonball* have become familiar to many European children. So far, there has been only limited exchange of children's programs within Europe; however, the European Broadcasting Union and its Working Group for Children's Programmes have set out to further international co-productions and exchange between the public broadcasters in Europe.

An important aspect of media in Europe is the role of the Commission of the European Union, which has tried to define a common framework for the media industry in the member states. The central element of its politics related to media is the directive "Television Without Frontiers," first adopted in 1989, revised in 1997, and expected to be revised again in 2006. The core aim of this directive is to guarantee that a television broadcaster with a license in one member state will not be hindered in distributing the program in any other member state. Regarding children and adolescents, two other issues of the directive have become important: a common framework for advertising rules, in particular for advertising directed at children; and some basic rules aiming at youth protection in television programs. According to the statutes of the European Union, these rules have been implemented in all member states.

Despite the activities of the European Union, the media in Europe are mainly shaped by political, economic, and cultural conditions on the national level. Thus, the media environments in which children and adolescents in Europe grow up may differ quite substantially from country to country (see Hans-Bredow-Institut's *International Media Handbook* for profiles of all European media systems). Some of the differences in the most important media sectors are described next.

BROADCASTING MEDIA

Regarding radio and television, the typical European model is the dual broadcasting system; that is, a coexistence of public broadcasters on the one hand and commercial broadcasters on the other hand. Unlike the situation in the United States, public broadcasters are not just a supplement to commercial ones but a central pillar of the broadcasting system; indeed, commercial broadcasting did not take hold until the mid-1980s. Public broadcasting's charge is to provide integrative and nonprofit-oriented programming for the whole population and to reflect the diversity of opinions and social and ethnic perspectives. Throughout Europe, different models have been developed to organize this public service approach to broadcasting. The most important difference is related to the influence of the state. The United Kingdom's BBC serves as the exemplary model for many public broadcasters around the world. In other countries, such as Germany, public broadcasters are rather independent of government, and responsibility is assigned to boards or commissions that represent different societal groups. In still other countries, the state directly influences financing, strategic decisions, or the recruitment of the personal staffs of the broadcasters. This is particularly true in the former communist countries. In the course of the transformation process that started in 1989, the former state-owned monopolistic broadcasters have been transformed step by step into public broadcasters; nevertheless, the situation

today is often characterized by ongoing political influence and a lack of civil society's control of public broadcasting. Political influence on public broadcasting can also be observed in some Western democracies; for example, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, who owns the biggest commercial media company in the country, has put substantial political pressure on RAI, the public service broadcaster in Italy.

As a rule, national public broadcasters offer two or three TV channels, which are targeted to different audiences. In all, audience shares for public services channels are between 30% and 50%. Children's programs, often advertising free and thus less commercialized, are integrated into the schedules of general channels. So far, thematic channels for children or adolescents are not offered by most of the public broadcasters; one exception is the German Kinderkanal (Children's Channel). Due to the ongoing process of digitalization, an increasing number of public service broadcasters are including dedicated children's channels as part of their digital offerings. However, serious financial problems currently limit public broadcasters' possibilities in this area. By early 2006, with the remarkable exception of the United Kingdom, digital distribution was far from reaching the majority of the European population.

In most European countries, commercial broadcasting did not start until the 1980s or, in the former communist countries, the early 1990s. In most countries, a few TV companies have succeeded in reaching high audience shares and generating quite a lot of advertising revenues. In general, following the respective priorities of the advertising industry, commercial channels are targeted to younger audiences; today, with very few exceptions, young people clearly prefer commercial channels to public service channels. With the increase of distribution facilities (via cable, satellite, and most recently digitalization), several global (American) commercial children's channels have become available for children in Europe, including the Cartoon Network, the Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, and Fox Kids Network.

An important condition for the availability of TV programs for children is the technical infrastructure for the distribution of TV channels. In this respect, the basic condition for watching television—a TV set at home—can be taken for granted throughout Europe; almost 100% of European households own at least one TV set (see Table 1, row 2). However, the quantity of channels available, and thus the range of children's programs to choose from, differs considerably across Europe. This is partly due to marked differences in cable policies during the 1980s and early 1990s. In 2004, the average cable penetration in Europe was 30.8% (see Table 1, row 3); however, this figure hides substantial differences. For example, in Belgium and the Netherlands, nearly the entire population has access to cable systems, whereas in Italy and in Greece cable does not play a role. Satellite, the second option for providing multichannel access, has shown a continuous growth over the past 20 years (see Table 1, row 4); in some European countries, for example, Austria and Denmark, 50% and more of the TV households receive their TV channels by satellite.

What is important regarding the program supply for children and adolescents is the difference between countries with and without multichannel environments. In countries with a high penetration of cable, satellite, or both, the majority of children have a choice between several dedicated national or international children's channels, whereas children in countries with a predominance of analogue terrestrial distribution can watch only children's programs within the respective national public or commercial channels. The latter is true for some of the Central and Eastern European countries, but also for some big Western countries, such as France (in 2004, 62% of the TV households had analogue terrestrial reception only) or Italy (around 80%) or Spain (75%). Whereas these differences between European countries have been quite stable for about 15 years, the recent process of digitalization will cause substantial changes. This process is moving especially fast in countries that do not yet have multichannel environments. The most prominent example is the United Kingdom. With a relatively weak cable infrastructure and moderate satellite distribution, until 2000 most British households were used to the few analogue channels that were broadcast terrestrially. In only a few years, digital TV (via satellite, cable, and terrestrial) succeeded in reaching more than one half of the population (in 2004, 55.8%). The distribution of digital TV is also strong in Norway (35%), Sweden and Ireland (28% each), as well as Finland (22%); besides the Nordic countries, also France (20%), Spain (19%), Austria (18%), and Germany (16%) have faced a considerable growth of digital distribution. To sum up, children and adolescents in different European countries meet quite different conditions regarding program supply. However. the general trend is in the direction of multichannel

Table 1 Audiovisual Equipment and Communication Technology in Europe, 2004

	Basis	*Total Europe*	*Western Europe**	*Central and Eastern Europe***
1) Population	in millions	788.8	397.0	391.8
2) TV households	in % of households	97.0	97.7	96.3
3) Cable	in % of TV households	30.8	33.4	27.3
4) Satellite	in % of TV households	17.4	24.6	7.9
5) Multiset	in % of TV households	41.5	52.6	30.3
6) VCR	in % of TV households	57.9	73.9	40.9
7) DVD player	in % of TV households	26.0	39.4	9.4
8) PC	in % of households	47.8	62.2	27.5
9) Internet	in % of population	38.6	52.3	22.4
10) Mobile phone	in % of population	69.8	84.8	53.8

SOURCE: IP (Ed.): *Television Key Facts 2005.*

* Includes Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

** Includes Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine.

environments and, as a consequence, a bigger number of dedicated channels for children and young people.

Another aspect of technical infrastructure is the availability of more than one TV set per household. Having more than one TV set, often with one set located in the child's bedroom, provides opportunities for children to watch without their parents. In this respect, substantial differences between Western and Central and Eastern Europe are to be observed (see Table 1, row 5). The same is true when it comes to technical equipment that enhances the television set by offering options to watch stored programs. More than 50% of the European TV households own a VCR, and more than 25% own a DVD player (see Table 1, rows 6 and 7).

NEW DIGITAL MEDIA

Over the past 10 years, the new digital media have become an integral part of the media and communication environment of children and young people. In general, this is also true for Europe. The figures provided in Table 1 (rows 8 and 9) refer to the total population; regarding children and adolescents, it must be taken into account that households with children generally have far better technical equipment than households without children. Thus, the estimates for children are substantially higher. Again, there are marked differences between countries. On the one hand, the general wealth and status of development of the respective countries seems to have an impact on availability of equipment; Table 1 shows that availability of digital equipment is substantially lower in Central and Eastern European countries. But within the group of Western countries, a difference between North and South becomes obvious as well. With regard to Internet use, Sweden (82% use the Internet) and Norway (75%) are clearly above the average, whereas Italy (35%), Spain (27%), and Greece (13%) are clearly below.

PRINT MEDIA

Another important indicator of media environments is the distribution of newspapers and other print media. Research such as that by Groeben and Hurrelmann shows that reading behavior of parents is a strong predictor for their children's reading behavior. With regard to newspaper circulation in Europe, statistics compiled by the World Association of Newspapers in the *World Press Trends* indicate that, in 2002, 10 European countries were among the 15 countries in

the world having the highest number of copies per 1,000 adults. Norway takes the first rank, with 705 newspapers distributed per 1,000 adults and a daily reach of 86%. After Japan (654 papers per 1,000 adults) come Finland (532) and Sweden (509). These data show that newspaper reading has a particularly strong tradition in the Nordic countries. Again, marked differences exist within Europe. People in Southern Europe, for example, in France (164 copies, 31% reach), Spain (127; 37%), Italy (118; 40%), and Portugal (83; 37%), read fewer newspapers than people in Northern Europe.

—Uwe Hasebrink

See also Computer Use, International; Entertainment-Education, International; European Broadcasting Union (EBU); European Comparative Study; Internet Use, International; Media Education, International; Radio, International; Television, International Viewing Patterns and

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EUROPEAN BROADCASTING UNION (EBU)

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU, or UER for the French name, *Union Européenne de Radio-Télévision*) is a professional association of national public service broadcasters with its main seat in Geneva, Switzerland. It has 74 active members in 54 countries of Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East and 44 associate members in 25 countries from other regions of the world. The EBU was founded in February 1950 by Western European radio and television broadcasters. In 1993, after the end of the East-West conflict, it merged with the OIRT (Organization for International Radio and Television), which had been its counterpart in Central and Eastern Europe (see Zeller, 1999).

According to its website, the EBU works on behalf of its members in the European area to negotiate broadcasting rights for major sports events, to operate the Eurovision and Euroradio networks, to organize program exchanges, to stimulate and coordinate co-productions, and to provide a full range of other operational, commercial, technical, legal, and strategic services. At its office in Brussels, the EBU represents the interests of public service broadcasters vis à vis the European institutions.

Although the main focus of EBU's activities is the exchange of news and sports events (discussed following), it also facilitates co-productions between members regarding programs for children and young people. Over the years, several series have been developed, including one program from each participating broadcaster that has been adapted to other European languages and thus distributed to children throughout Europe. Television cooperation extends to educational programs, documentaries, and co-productions of animation series, and competitions for young musicians, young dancers, and screenwriters. It also includes traditional light entertainment, such as the Eurovision Song Contest; the live broadcasts from this annual event are distributed in almost all European countries and thus create a real pan-European audience.

There is also collaboration in the field of radio, covering music, news, sports, youth programs, and local and regional stations. Each year, the Euroradio network relays 2,500 concerts and operas, and the Radio Department coordinates the transmission of 440 sports fixtures and 120 major news events.

EUROVISION

The most important activity of the EBU is the Eurovision permanent network for the exchange of TV news and programs, which was created in 1954. Most news and sports pictures on European screens pass

through this network. In its first years, it was used primarily for transmissions of important events, but since 1956 it has also included systematic news exchange between the EBU members. Eurovision participants contribute items to the exchanges on a reciprocal basis, using the Eurovision network for distribution. The exchanges are organized at regularly scheduled times or as required by news developments and are managed by the Eurovision Operations staff in Geneva. The content of the Eurovision news exchanges reflects the participants' own national and international news gathering.

Today, the network manages more than 100,000 transmissions per year; around 30,000 news items are exchanged between the partners, using 50 paths on 5 satellites. The network's members reach about 350 million television viewers.

An important strategic function of the EBU is to build and maintain partnerships with international sports federations and to negotiate transmission rights for the members. Eurovision's sports acquisitions include European and world events such as, for example, the Olympic Games, the European Football Championships, the World Championships in Athletics, and the Tour de France.

—Uwe Hasebrink

See also Europe, Media Use in; Television, International Viewing Patterns and

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WEBSITE

European Broadcasting Union: www.ebu.ch

EUROPEAN COMPARATIVE STUDY

Within the field of media and communications, research comparing common activities or practices in two or more countries is much advocated and increasingly conducted. Increasingly, regionalization and globalization are encouraging communication researchers to address the cross-national or transnational dimensions of cultural institutions, products, audiences, and policies. Further, funding bodies, policy imperatives, professional associations, and publication outlets in the field all increasingly favor comparative research. Yet, as the phenomena of media and communication increasingly cross borders, more researchers are taking on the challenge, asking some fascinating questions not only about the media but also about childhood, family, and culture. Although research on media use by children and adolescents has been primarily quantitative, some qualitative studies have also been conducted.

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF COMPARATIVE RESEARCH

The aims of European comparative study include improving understanding of one's own country; improving understanding of other countries; testing a theory across diverse settings; examining transnational processes across different contexts; examining the local reception of imported cultural forms; building abstract, universally applicable theory; challenging claims to universality; evaluating scope and value of certain phenomena; identifying marginalized cultural forms; improving international understanding; and learning from the policy initiatives of others. Depending on the aims, differing models for comparison are selected, each conceptualizing the similarities and differences among countries in different ways.

One key issue for comparative research is the question of country selection. In European comparisons, attempts are generally made to include Northern and Southern countries, large and small countries, and countries from diverse language groupings and religious traditions. The European Union plays a key role in developing policy relating to media and information technologies (from cultural, educational, family, and employment policy), which in turn creates a demand for policy-relevant research. Hence, countries for comparison are often selected from member states (15 in 1995, 25 since 2005). European funding sources include not only the European Commission but also the European Science Foundation (30 states) and the Council of Europe (46 states).

Comparative research faces a key issue of comparability of measures. This includes addressing differing conceptual categories and linguistic terms (e.g., *privacy, family, audience* are all terms with variable meanings across Europe). Identifying the relevant dimensions for comparison is similarly demanding.

MEDIA USE BY CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Children's time spent with media depends not only on children's media preferences in different countries and the media system in their country but also on their available time—and this will vary according to the school day, the parents' working week, conventions regarding leisure activities, shared activities, mealtimes, and bedtime. In the recent project "Children and Their Changing Media Environment," which compared 12 European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom), each of these dimensions had to be compared before drawing conclusions regarding children's media time across Europe.

The only European project to compare children and young people's experiences across old and new media using qualitative and quantitative methods, "Children and Their Changing Media Environment" found similar trends in the adoption and use of a growing range of screen media (multiple televisions, video and DVD players, computers, etc.) in European homes, replicating a typology of media-rich, "traditional" (television, books, and music but no computer or Internet) and media-poor households across Europe. However, a range of differences were also found. In Dutch homes, cable television is nearly universal; computers, the Internet, and mobile technology arrived earlier in Nordic countries; Britain places the greatest stress on children's personal screen entertainment media (e.g., televisions in their bedrooms). Partly in consequence, British children watch the most television, whereas Nordic children are fairly termed "pioneers of new technologies," spending longer with interactive media as part of a more established culture of domestic and educational technology. The project also contrasted media use in "traditional family-oriented cultures" and "peer-oriented cultures." In Spain, researchers found a strongly family-oriented culture in which children spend comparatively little time watching favorite television programs alone in their bedrooms. In the United Kingdom and Germany, they found more privatized media use, partly because of cultural restrictions on children's freedom to meet friends in public locations. In the Nordic countries, demographic factors played a role in children's relatively greater freedom to determine their peer-oriented, media-rich lifestyles.

Most European comparisons address the challenges of comparison by standardizing their methodology and research tools, devoting considerable attention to equivalence and transparency in measurement procedures, and often selecting quantitative approaches to achieve this. Hence, the "SAFT" research project focused on safety, awareness, facts, and tools for children on the Internet in five European countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, and Iceland). The "E-Living" project coordinated pan-European longitudinal household panels to generate quantitative data on the uptake and usage of information and communication technologies. Fewer projects attempt qualitative research, comparisons of observations, interviews, and qualitative data, being considered even more demanding, not least because of the linguistic issues. However, the "EMTEL" project took an ethnographic approach to everyday life to understand the changing place of media and technology for families in Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Norway, and the United Kingdom.

In practice, cross-national research comparisons are exciting but demanding, and critical responses to cross-national research are commonplace, not least from those who conduct it. Researchers may find themselves comparing not only their findings but also their theories and concepts, methodological preferences, research ethics, writing styles, and publication strategies, all of which vary cross-nationally, over and above differences in the topic under investigation.

—Sonia Livingstone

See also Europe, Media Use in

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EXCITATION-TRANSFER THEORY

The theory of excitation transfer addresses sequential dependencies in emotional reactivity. Specifically, the theory posits a facilitation of affective and emotional reactions as a function of residual sympathetic excitation from preceding moods and emotions. In practical terms, the theory deals with two or more aroused emotional reactions that closely follow one another, and regardless of the kinds of aroused emotions involved, it predicts that the later reactions are intensified by lingering arousal from earlier reactions. The theory is thus capable of explaining, for example, why a chain of moderately distressing challenges can escalate frustration, fear, or anger to extreme levels; why people laugh especially heartily after having been frightened; why young men behave more aggressively after having been sexually aroused; why adolescents get more romantic after seeing a horror film; why children are similarly inclined to snuggle up on Mom after her reading of a scary fairytale; or, for that matter, why they become ecstatic upon learning that the terrifying wolf is dead. The theory, then, applies to emotional reactivity, whether it is evoked by exposure to media presentations or in actual situations. Moreover, its application to affective experiences during adolescence seems especially useful, as this developmental period is characterized by emotional turmoil and hyper-reactivity.

Technically speaking, excitation-transfer theory is based on the asynchrony of cognitive and excitatory adaptation to environmental stimulus changes. Neural mediation enables the quasi-instantaneous cognitive adjustment to situational changes. The systemic hormonal mediation of excitation, in contrast, is sluggish, and excitatory adjustment to change is accomplished only after considerable passage of time. The consequence of this discrepancy in adjustment time is that residues of excitation linger and influence behavior and experience for some time after cognitive adjustment to a novel situation has occurred.

As an integral part of the three-factor theory of emotion, excitation-transfer theory posits that the intensity of emotional reactivity is primarily determined by the magnitude of prevailing sympathetic excitation. To the extent, then, that residual excitation from preceding emotions is present when an emotional reaction is elicited by novel stimuli, the composite of residual and newly instigated excitation is expected to foster emotional reactivity whose intensity is greater than that specific to the new instigation alone. Residual excitation may therefore be considered to have "artificially" intensified the newly triggered emotion.

Provided that the emotions under consideration are marked by elevated sympathetic activity, the prediction of emotion facilitation entails the assumption that residual excitation from any emotion is transferable into any other emotion. Residues from fear, for example, should intensify anger, and residues from anger should likewise intensify fear. The facilitation of numerous emotions via residual excitation from taxonomically similar or discrepant preceding emotions is, in fact, well established by research demonstrations.

Although the exploration of excitation transfer has initially focused on situationally evoked emotions, the transfer facilitation of emotional reactivity has also been demonstrated for message-instigated emotions. Facilitation has been from, into, and both from and into such emotions. For example, residues from erotica-induced sexual excitation were found to facilitate subsequent situational anger and aggression; residues from disgust reactions proved capable of intensifying the enjoyment of music; and residues from exposure to rousing music fostered more laughter in response to comedy.

In examining emotionality in response to message sequences, the influence of residual excitation from decidedly aversive emotional reactions to prior segments on hedonically opposite emotional reactions of gratification, joy, and elation to subsequent segments has received most attention. For instance, it has been observed, in both fiction and reality formats, that the more intense the emotion of distressful suspense from the fear that a much-loved person might come to harm, the greater the joy upon a satisfying resolution. The facilitation of amusement in the aftermath of suspenseful or tragic occurrences, known as comic relief, is another well-established example of excitation-transfer facilitation across the hedonic divide. The

labeling of this phenomenon of mirthful overreaction is a misnomer, however, as the experience is not one of excitatory relief but, on the contrary, one of excitatory boosting of a response to comical happenings.

The application of excitation-transfer theory to emotional reactivity to message sequences is unique in that the necessary chunking and time compression of featured events invites transfer facilitation. As the presentation of emotion-eliciting events is rapidly followed by that of other events, undiminished excitatory residues can enter into and intensify reactions to the later presented events. The positioning and timing of segments in chains thus offer means of manipulation of emotional reactivity.

—Dolf Zillmann

See also Arousal Theories; Physiological Arousal

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EXPERIENCE SAMPLING METHOD (ESM)

The experience sampling method (ESM), also known as the *ecological momentary assessment (EMA)*, is a process for gathering a substantial number of repeated observations for data analysis. ESM collects representative examples of opinions concerning aspects of daily life taken while events are taking place, allowing a respondent to give immediate and complete information and the analyst to assess information taken from phenomena at the moment they occurred. Use of this research tool, which was developed originally for psychological research, has spread to the broader social science, medical, and communications studies communities. The method is credited to Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and grew out of his work at the University of Chicago in the early 1970s.

THE PROCESS

The basic process requires the subjects to record in a diary where they are at the moment the assessment is called for, what they are doing at that precise time, a list of their companions, if any, and what they are thinking about during the activity, as well as an appraisal of their cognitive and affective states of mind according to a variety of provided numerical scales. Seven variables are normally used to chart the relative experiential value of these activities, corresponding to these questions: (1) How intense is your current level of attention during the present activity? (2) How much do you appreciate your current activity? (3) How happy are you at this time, taking part in the current activity? (4) How intensive are your feelings toward your current activity? (5) How much do you want to be participating and engaging in your current activity? (6) How do you feel about yourself right now? (7) How important is your current activity to your plans for the future? The last question can focus on either the immediate future or the more distant future.

Recording takes place when the subject receives a signal, usually originating from either a provided beeper or the respondent's own resources (such as a watch or PDA), once every 2-hour period; full participation usually requires evaluations to take place over at least a week. The timing of the assessments is quite important and requires careful attention. As normal practice calls for reporting multiple times during the day, it is necessary to space the reports carefully to achieve a balance between random sampling and avoidance of taking two samples taken one after the other.

ESM FOR MEDIA RESEARCH PURPOSES

Researchers have found that ESM has some particular strengths that make it well suited for media-related studies, including studies focusing on younger respondents. The usual difficulties relating to faulty or insecure memory and embellished response are minimized by the reporting methods inherent in the form. The

simple, relatively short questionnaires are easy for children and adolescents to complete accurately and without confusion, decreasing the number of suspect submissions due to unfocused or mistaken responses.

The works of Mikhaly Csikszentmihalyi, Robert Kubey, and Reed Larson, in particular, are of note and utility. The detached methods inherent in ESM allow a researcher to explore the life and activities of a young adult without being viewed as an outsider during the process, which permits a more relaxed response. ESM studies have shown that many common assumptions regarding media use by adolescents have been incorrect, such as the assumption that the majority of media use by teens is a shared experience. ESM studies have shown, rather, that teens tend to spend more time alone with media sources than in groups or pairs. This finding alone calls into question many previous conclusions based on the hypothesis that adolescents tend to congregate during media use, influencing each other's choices. Another misconception that ESM studies have shown to be inaccurate is the notion that heavy television viewing accompanies adolescence in the United States and is a part of a separation from family activities. Although time spent listening to popular music increases with a subject's age, not only does television viewing decrease, but it seems to indicate a closer tie to family within a subject's life. Again, popular wisdom suggests otherwise, but a clearer picture is painted by studies in which respondents have no reason to prevaricate and are not influenced to adapt their answers to meet the expectations of a researcher.

—Solomon Davidoff

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Bedrooms, Media Use in; Family Communication Patterns Model; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Fantasy, Media Effects on; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Media Effects; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of; Research Methods, Children and; Research Methods, Experimental Studies; Research Methods, Field Studies; Research Methods, Longitudinal Studies; Research Methods, Natural Experiments; Research Methods, Qualitative; Research Methods, Questionnaires and Surveys

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EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR

Externalizing behavior, also labeled *risk behavior, undercontrolled behavior, conduct disorder,* and, more generally, *problem behavior*, can be defined as a set of two related syndromes: rule-breaking behavior and aggressive behavior. Children showing externalizing behavior are more inclined to fighting, bullying, disobedience, lying, and petty theft. When they reach adolescence, they may still be prone to fighting, rule-breaking behavior, excessive substance abuse, dangerous driving, and risky sexual behavior. Classification and analysis of such behavior are important in the study of negative consequences of media use by children and adolescents. Research on externalizing behavior has identified a number of risk factors, including certain types of media exposure.

Theoretically, externalizing behavior is contrasted with internalizing behavior, also referred to as *overcontrolled behavior* and *emotional problem behavior.* Internalizing behavior concerns syndromes such as depression, anxiety, extreme withdrawnness, and somatic complaints. Externalizing behavior may hold negative consequences for the actor, but it also affects the social environment in a direct way; other people may become victims of the sequence in which externalizing behavior is acted out. In contrast, internalizing problems first and foremost affects the mood and functioning of the person who has these problems. The distinction between these two major classifications of problem behaviors must not be made absolute, because internalizing and externalizing problems may co-occur.

CATEGORIZING EXTERNALIZING PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Emil Kraepelin published his classification of psychiatric ailments in 1883, and ever since then, psychiatrists

and psychologists have tried to develop conceptual systems to clearly demarcate different psychiatric disorders and problem behaviors. Until the 1960s, relatively little attention was given to the systematization of pathology among children and adolescents. During the last few decades, professionals have directed their attention to the problem behavior among nonadults and have developed subsets of classification for younger age groups. Today, two types of classification systems dominate the field of taxonomy of problem behaviors. The first deals with the aggregation of knowledge of diagnosticians, systematized in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).* The second typology is the result of empirical analysis of problem behavior symptoms of large clinical and nonclinical populations. The best-known example of this second type of classification is Thomas Achenbach's assessment of behavioral and emotional problems and adaptive functioning.

The *DSM* contains a clinically derived classification system developed through the consultation of diagnosticians and researchers in the field of problem behavior. They try to reach agreement on how to define and assess various disorders. This procedure has been referred to as a "top down" approach, in which experts build and refine a conceptual system that should meet wide acceptance among their peers. The most important aspect of a system such as the *DSM*'s is that it must be reliable and valid; that is, a specific type of problem behavior must be consistently and correctly qualified as such across time and situations by different professionals. The *DSM* uses a categorical approach to defining problem behavior; the border between normal and pathological behavior is relatively strict, and the same holds for the demarcation of different syndromes. Among clinicians, the *DSM* is the most widely used classification system of emotional and behavioral problems. Within the *DSM*, externalizing behavior is referred to as an *oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)*, consisting of a pattern of seriously negativistic hostile and deviant behavior, or as *conduct disorder (CD),* indicating relatively extreme aggression and antisocial behavior. Children and adolescents showing signs of ODD lose their tempers easily, frequently argue and refuse to comply with parents, annoy others and are easily annoyed, and often show signs of anger, resentment, spitefulness, and vindictiveness. Youngsters with CD may violate parental and social rules, show aggression and cruelty to people and animals, destroy property, steal, and deceive others. Children and adolescents are diagnosed with ODD or CD if several of these defining behaviors persist over a prolonged period.

The second type of taxonomy can be qualified as an empirical approach to classification. Here, classification starts from data provided by parents, teachers, or the children and adolescents themselves, by filling in questionnaires such as the Child Behavior Check List (CBCL), the Teacher Report Form (TRF) or the Youth Self Report (YSR). Through the use of statistical analysis of these data, related problem behaviors are clustered and typified as different syndromes. Thomas Achenbach and researchers inspired by his work have tried to make an inventory of behavior in the "normal" and "pathological" ranges by comparing normal and clinical groups of children and adolescents. This taxonomy is referred to as a "bottom up" approach. Naturally, this type of classification also must meet the demands of reliability and validity, but an important difference with a clinically derived system is that distinctions between the normal and the problematic are a question of degree rather than of kind. Achenbach has conceptualized the broad aforementioned internalizing and externalizing problem behavior syndromes. Although the prevalence of problem behaviors may vary between countries, there has been cross-national support for the Achenbach system of internalizing behavior (anxiety, depression, withdrawnness, and somatic complaints) and externalizing behavior (serious rule-breaking behavior and aggressive behavior). Children and adolescents who score high on scales designed to measure externalizing behavior, for example, lack guilt, have "bad" friends, steal, get into fights easily, and destroy property. Generally, they are truant from school more often or drop out of school early, and in the course of adolescence they run a higher risk of illicit drug use, risky behavior, irresponsible sex, and delinquency.

RISK FACTORS AND DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR

Considerable research has been done on the risk factors and protective factors for externalizing behavior. Today, extensive exposure of children and adolescents to media portrayals of violence and aggression has been linked to some types of externalizing behavior. Other analysis focuses on a variety of other risk factors.

Richard Jessor's problem behavior model is one of the most systematic accounts of the risk factors and

protective factors for personal and social undesirable outcomes. Jessor believes that problem behavior originates in the genetic makeup, personality, and (perceived) environment of an individual. Such diverse factors as alcoholism and psychiatric illness in the family history, poverty, racial inequality, lack of parental support, low self-esteem, and risk-taking propensity may contribute to an adolescent lifestyle riddled with externalizing problems. Jessor's risk factor models imply that the co-occurrence of several of these factors increases the chance of later problem behavior.

Rolf Loeber and his colleagues have developed another important conceptualization of problem behavior. Loeber also catalogs a long list of factors contributing to problem behavior, locating them in the person's personality, family, peer group, school environment, and neighborhood. He assumes that three pathways to (boys') problem behavior and delinquency exist. The *overt pathway* starts with minor aggression, followed by physical fighting and then violence. The *covert pathway* consists of a developmental path from lying and petty theft through property damage to moderate-to-serious delinquency. The *authority conflict pathway* comprises stubbornness and disobedience at first, then authority avoidance as shown through truancy and running away, to full-blown, serious externalizing behavior afterward.

Although several other authors have also found that externalizing behaviors in their different childhood and adolescent manifestations are remarkably stable throughout the life course, a childhood propensity should not be viewed as an impetus for a ride on a developmental path that is narrow and necessarily single ended. For instance, fewer than half the children with oppositional tendencies, thus qualified as "hard to manage" by teachers and parent, will end up with externalizing problems in adolescence. Overall, there is a considerable decrease in aggression from childhood to adolescence, and only a small percentage of children with high childhood aggression will show continued high levels during adolescence.

THE MEDIA AND EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR

For more than 50 years, researchers have studied the relationship between violent content on television and aggressive behavior of youthful viewers. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the impact of media content and usage on externalizing behavior, and current research deals not only with older media such as television and movies but also with electronic games and music videos. Scholars are also studying the role that the family may play in the context of media use by children and adolescents. For example, the Center for Research on Interactive Technology, Television, and Children is examining the possibility that violent content may moderate the relationship between family conflict and children's externalizing behavior.

THE IMPACT OF LABELING

It is important to keep in mind the distinction made by Terri Moffitt between *life-course persistent* and *adolescence-limited* antisocial behavior. Adolescence is by definition a period in which young people explore the limits of their own possibilities and the boundaries that divide the normal and the extreme, the permissible and the illegal. For many young people, breaking rules is part of the process of becoming a law-abiding citizen. They may engage in illegal activities and exhibit isolated antisocial acts. Adolescent externalizing behavior peaks around age 17 and declines rapidly thereafter. As Moffitt notes, only young people with persistent histories of externalizing problems throughout childhood and youth and into adulthood form the group of people with truly antisocial attitudes and behaviors and thus should be characterized as such.

Some researchers warn about the effects labeling may have. Classification and diagnosis may help characterize the causes of associated problem behaviors in young people; at the same time, labeling people as problematic may have effects in itself. Labels may induce stigmatization and thus deepen the problems of young people, as these labels may trigger negative expectancies in other people. Furthermore, categorization may enhance overgeneralization—that is, disregard for the specific situation and behavioral repertoire of an individual child or adolescent. Last but not least, labeling may track and pin down problems in "personal" characteristics too much and thus obscure the fact that most problems also have their origins in the interpersonal and wider social contexts in which children and adolescents function. Classification systems should be applied prudently and should work to classify externalizing problem *behaviors*, not children and adolescents as individual *people*.

—Tom ter Bogt and Stephen Soitos

See also Aggression, Advertising and; Aggression, Electronic Games and; Aggression, Movies and; Aggression, Music and; Aggression, Music Videos and; Aggression, Television and; Music Listening, Problem Behavior and; Violence, Effects of

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F

FAMILY, TELEVISION PORTRAYALS OF

The public seems constantly to be concerned about the way families are depicted in television, and the past three United States administrations have each addressed this concern with strong rhetoric. The administration of George H. W. Bush is best known for this, as he advised American families to be a lot more like *The Waltons* and a lot less like *The Simpsons*. His vice president, Dan Quayle, trumped that comment when he said, "It doesn't help matters when prime time TV has Murphy Brown—a character who supposedly epitomizes today's intelligent, highly paid, professional woman—mocking the importance of a father by bearing a child alone and calling it just another 'lifestyle choice.'" Quayle's comments received so much attention that, a full decade later, CNN did a retrospective on his comments and their impact titled "Quayle: Ten Years After Murphy Brown."

Why do politicians and the public think that the way families are depicted on television is so important? Obviously, implicit in their concern is the assumption that families are presented on television differently from real life. A related assumption is that television families are presented negatively, even antisocially. A third assumption is that such depictions have sufficient socialization potential that children and adolescents are harmed by the nature of these presentations. In fact, some of the most prominent media effects theories—such as cultivation, social learning/cognitive, and other socialization theories—predict that consumption of television fare in which families are depicted as engaging in antisocial behaviors could create distorted perceptions of family life among developmentally immature viewers and could even affect children's behavior in the family environment.

DEPICTIONS OF FAMILIES IN TELEVISION

How are families really depicted on television? Is there reason for public concern because of atypical and antisocial depictions? When most people choose to address such questions, they probably cite exemplar television programs to support their theses, but doing so can lead to logical fallacies and misrepresentation. For example, the 1950s might well be referred to as the era of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet,* which featured an archetypal nuclear family; however, also popular during that decade were *December Bride*, which revolved around a happy, well-adjusted widow, and *Bachelor Father*, which depicted the life of a single-parent family headed by a father. *The Osbournes*, which featured a radical, dysfunctional, real-world family, might be selected to represent the 2000s, ignoring the presence and popularity of well-adjusted nuclear families such as the one featured on *Joan of Arcadia*.

Because of the bias inherent in such asystematic selectivity, research scientists have conducted systematic content analyses to provide a more objective representation of television families over time. These investigations have included a variety of goals, including the assessment of (1) the prevalence of families on television, (2) family social class, (3) family composition and configurations over time, (4) family interactions, (5) other social realities in family depictions,

and (6) the psychological health and well-being of television's families.

Prevalence

Many early content analyses of television families focused on the prevalence of families on prime-time television and soap operas. The most general findings were that it was often difficult to tell whether or not characters had a family because relatives of most fictional television characters did not appear in the stories. However, families were well represented on television, and families of all types (e.g., nuclear, single-parent, divorced) were presented on both prime-time programming and on soap operas, even during the earliest days of television.

Social Class

Regarding family social class, content analyses have revealed that most television families were middle class. Although all social classes were represented, working-class families have tended to be underrepresented during most of television's history.

Composition and Configuration

Several scholars have examined the composition and configuration of television's families. Findings have revealed different images of the family on television, as compared with normative patterns of real family life. For example, families with children have become increasingly prominent in television programs over time (e.g., in the 1950s, 25% of television's families were childless, whereas during the 1990s only 3% of television families were childless). This pattern contrasts markedly with normative data on real families: In the 1950s, most American families included children; by the end of the 20th century, fewer than 38% of homes included children. In fact, the most typical household in the year 2000 was that of a single person with no children, which accounted for one third of all U.S. households.

Other, similar patterns of disparity between real-world families and television families have been found, including family size. The size of American families decreased rather dramatically as the 20th century progressed. In contrast, television families tended to acquire more members over time.

Other family configurations that are increasingly common in real life are rarely presented on television. One example is the so-called empty nest family, in which children are grown and living away from home. Although such families are quite common in real life and undoubtedly are normative among grandparent homes, empty nesters represent fewer than 1% of television's families.

Sometimes television does not underrepresent real-world family configurations; instead, it overrepresents them. For example, single-parent families headed by fathers are relatively rare, according to census data, ranging from 1% to 3% of households between 1950 and the present. Yet, such families have been consistently prominent on television, ranging from 17% in the 1950s to 23% to 25% in more recent decades. In some racial and ethnic groups in America, families with fathers in their households are relatively rare.

Family Interactions

In terms of family interactions, research has found that husbands and wives were relatively equal in initiating interactions and that most conflict occurred in husband–wife dyads. Parents were most likely to interact with same-sex children, and affirming interactions outnumbered disaffirming interactions by a substantial margin. Taken as a whole, the majority of family interactions have been found to reinforce the traditional view of family relations, with males dominating and females nurturing, although many exceptions to that pattern have been noted. Among African American families, husbands and sons have been found to be more active in interactions than mothers and daughters.

Other Social Realities

Other investigations have systematically examined other social realities in family depictions. Early studies showed that wives and mothers were typically concerned with cooking, cleaning, and children and delegated most authority and responsibility to male characters. For the most part, work and family were presented in separate spheres in television's early family shows, and when a wife or mother was shown having work responsibilities, she often had problems with her personal relationships. In later programs, the image of "Supermom" became common, with the working wife and mother presented as doing all things well.

Some research has been conducted on the depiction of families of color on television. The typical conclusion has been that the social realities of African American, Latina/o, Asian American, and Native American families have not been portrayed accurately. In fact, the typical conclusion has been that portrayals of families of color are based on stereotypical, stylized views of a small number of decision makers in the television industry.

Psychological Health

Other research has asked more penetrating questions, such as "How psychologically healthy are America's television families?" Questions assessing the psychological health and well-being of television families may well get more directly to issues of prominence of antisocial depictions. To date, research that has systematically examined the psychological well-being of television families has determined that the vast majority of families were psychologically healthy, whether the criteria of comparison were taken from family therapy or from psychiatry. Only 2% to 4% of families suffered from poor communication practices, lack of cohesion, or lack of ability to manage change within the family environment. Given these data, if the mental health of television's families were compared to the psychological profiles of normative real families, undoubtedly the typical television family has been much more healthy psychologically than the typical real family.

FUTURE RESEARCH

An obvious next step in investigations of family depictions on television is to more systematically compare the families of television with those of the real world. Even more sorely needed are studies examining the impact of viewing television's atypical family configurations, interactions, social conventions, and mental health on the social reality of child and adolescent viewers.

—Jennings Bryant and J. Alison Bryant

See also Fathers, Media Portrayals of; Gender Roles on Television; Mothers, Media Portrayals of

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FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS MODEL

A variety of studies suggest that family communication norms can help explain media-specific discussions and effects. The family communication patterns (FCP) model, developed by Jack McLeod and Steve Chaffee, has provided one valuable way to look at the effect of the family communication environment on children's attitudes and behaviors. It has been especially important for scholars studying routes to parental influence on media effects.

The model addresses the gap left by the unfortunate fact that many parents do little intentionally to affect the media's influence on their children, perhaps not realizing how influential they can be. They may be especially unaware of how important they are as an indirect influence. According to McLeod and Chaffee, parents teach children how to manage and interpret information in general through their own family communication patterns. This, then, affects the way children approach and internalize media messages.

The FCP model conceptualizes parent-child communication as taking place along two relatively independent dimensions. The first, called *socio orientation*, reflects the parent's desire for harmonious interpersonal relationships in the family through the emphasis of conformity and control. The second dimension, called *concept orientation*, reflects the parent's emphasis on sharing and challenging ideas. Some scholars have suggested that socio orientation reflects a desire to maintain the status quo and is internally focused. Concept orientation reflects a more external focus. Parents can emphasize one dimension, both dimensions, or neither.

When McLeod and Chaffee conceptualized two dimensions of communication style, it represented an

important parsing of the prevailing unidimensional views of parenting style, such as those of Diana Baumrind, Brant Burleson, and others, which combined behavior management orientations with communication characteristics. McLeod and Chaffee's typology attempts to explain the importance of considering management style and communication style separately. This has made the FCP model particularly useful for the study of media-related parenting strategies, such as rule making and discussion of content.

In the FCP model, parents low on both socio and concept orientation are called *laissez faire* because they do not emphasize any orientation. Parents high on socio orientation but low on concept orientation are considered *protective* because they emphasize control and shy away from the discussion of ideas. Parents with the opposite orientation—low on socio orientation and high on concept orientation—are called *pluralistic* because they welcome ideas and de-emphasize conformity. Ironically, some research has indicated that children of pluralistic parents tend to model their parents more than do children of protective parents. Finally, parents emphasizing both orientations are known as *consensual* because they think open discussion is important but nonetheless want to maintain family harmony and control.

The model was designed from the parent's perspective rather than the child's, inspiring debate among scholars regarding the extent to which the message parents think they send is the message children receive. A variety of studies have found that parents' reports correlate only modestly with children's reports. Some have found that children's reports provide better predictive validity, whereas others have suggested that the constructs are too abstract for preadolescent children to appraise. Other research suggests that children can respond to the questions but interpret them differently from adults.

To measure socio orientation, sometimes called *control orientation*, parents traditionally indicate how often they tell their children that their ideas are correct and that children shouldn't question them, how often they answer their child's arguments by saying something like, "You'll know better when you grow up," how often they say that we should give in during arguments rather than make people angry, how often they say that children should not argue with adults, and how often they say that some things just shouldn't be talked about. To measure concept orientation, sometimes called *communication orientation*, parents traditionally are asked how often they tell their children that people should look at both sides of an issue, how often they tell their children that every member of the family should have some say in family decisions, how often they tell their children that it's important to question other people's opinions, how often they tell their children that kids know more than adults about some things, and how often they tell their children that it's important to get their ideas across even if others don't like it. The questions frequently are modified so that children can be asked their perceptions of their parents' behavior.

The FCP model continues to attract attention because it has been found to predict a variety of socialization outcomes relevant to media use, parental mediation, public affairs, health decisions, academic achievement, persuasion, and consumer attitudes. For example, children from socio-oriented families tend to watch more entertainment television, including televised violence, but without much discussion. They tend to use television as a facilitator for social interaction and are more responsive to persuasive appeals based on the social status of the messenger. Children from concept-oriented families tend to watch more public affairs programming, to know more about public affairs, to be more involved in civic activities, to be more skeptical of advertising, to be less likely to identify with violent characters, and to have parents who practice active mediation. They tend to evaluate persuasive appeals on the basis of argument quality. With regard to the full typology, scholars have found that children from protective families are easily influenced by authority figures and that children from laissez faire families tend to be influenced by peers and a variety of other sources. Children from consensual families tend to reject messages that conflict with their parents' viewpoints, whereas children from pluralistic families are more autonomous.

The model also continues to hold the interest of scholars trying to achieve a better understanding of the model's significance and validity. Some choose to employ the *revised family communication patterns model (RFCP),* reconceptualized by L. D. Ritchie as comprising *conformity* and *conversation* orientations, whereas other scholars prefer to use the original measures.

—Erica Weintraub Austin

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Adult Mediation Strategies; Coviewing; Externalizing Behavior; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Media Effects; Parenting Styles; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory

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FAMILY ENVIRONMENT, MEDIA EFFECTS ON

Two noticeable evolutions in research on media effects on the family environment are (a) a shift from a television perspective to an emphasis on the changing media environment and (b) a shift from a child-centered approach to a family approach.

The first evolution is a very slow one that sheds light on a problematic issue in effects research. From the day of its introduction in the family home, television has been regarded as the central medium. Until the 1980s, the main body of research concentrated on the effects of television on family life and especially on the role of parents as mediators of television content for their children. As a result, the family was conceptualized as the context for television viewing. With the introduction of the VCR in the 1980s and the personal home computer in the 1990s, the focus on television was expanded to include these new media. However, this change in perspective only shifted attention from one media appliance to another without recognizing the importance of the entire media environment.

Furthermore, emphasis has often been placed on displacement hypotheses, with researchers studying how new media affect television viewing and whether time spent with new media displaces time spend with older media. Early research into the effects of the Internet on the family environment, for example, indicates that time spent on the Internet displaces time spent in social activities. The more time people spend on the Internet, the more they lose contact with their social environments. This effect is most apparent in people who are heavy users of the Internet. Use of the Internet could lead to privatization (retreat into the family home) and individualization (retreat from family life). However, the Internet is in itself a social medium. It is used primarily to communicate with others through activities such as chat, email, virtual communities, and blogging, which are especially popular with teenagers. Communication through the Internet gives them private spaces that cannot be invaded by their parents. Phone conversations can be overheard by parents, but chatting on the Internet makes private conversations possible.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Previously, the family environment was regarded as a given, and the individual family member was studied apart from his or her surroundings. Today, analogue reasoning is found in relation to the family's media context. Researchers now argue that the use and presence of a media appliance cannot be studied separately from the use and presence of other media appliances in the home. Furthermore, when media appliances enter the family environment, they are brought into a changing network of family relationships and media uses. Families are becoming centers of multimedia activities, and children's bedrooms are evolving into multimedia islands. As a result, the implications of these new media for family life have emerged as a focus of recent research. Researchers ask whether new media cause changes in family relationships and how the

"I'm too tired to listen to a story tonight, mom. Just e-mail something and I'll read it tomorrow."

network of family relationships incorporates new media. Therefore, it is not a question of how these new media affect family life or what families do with these new technologies. Rather, it has become a question of how they are incorporated into family life and what importance families attach to them. Increasingly, these questions are being addressed using qualitative research techniques. It is clear that families cannot be seen as black boxes in which media are consumed according to the intentions of a computer designer. Instead, families incorporate media into their everyday lives. In this respect, media use is not mediated by a family context but embedded in family dynamics; as such, it has implications for family life. It is a reflection of general family functioning.

When a new media appliance enters the family home, it is used very intensively. This can create an imbalance in family relationships. For example, when the sole Internet connection is in a living room where family members previously did not come together, conflicts are created. Family members who previously spent much time alone in the home are forced together in one space, whereas previously they spent more time alone. In reaction to this imbalance, families may look for solutions that enable them to return to their former patterns of family life. For example, they may decide to have an Internet connection in every bedroom so that family life can get "back to normal."

Another important effect of media in the family environment is the creation of new expert roles. Especially with the introduction of the PC and the Internet, young people often are regarded as the experts. In most families, they are more knowledgeable about new media. They know how to use new media and are more flexible in their use. This gives them a new position in the family environment that sometimes ameliorates problems in relationships between generations. For example, a father and his son may go to the same computer club and share an interest in computer software. Siblings who are hooked on computer games may play together and exchange cheat codes.

Although parents and siblings influence children in the family environment, family members are also influenced by their peers. Children are sometimes "forced" to watch certain television programs in order to keep up with their friends. They may need to follow up on the latest computer games or certain Internet sites in order to be "cool" and to be accepted by peers. This peer pressure may cause problems for family functioning when, for example, parents do not want children to connect to the Internet or forbid children to play certain computer games. Parents, too, can be under peer pressure. For example, they can be pressured by colleagues to have email at home or to do electronic banking. Thus, peer pressure about media can affect the family environment.

—Veerle Van Rompaey

See also Displacement Effect; Family Communication Patterns Model; Media Education, Family Involvement in; Media Effects, History of Research on; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Parenting Styles; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of

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FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, TELEVISION AND

Opinion regarding the family on television is divided. For the most part, scholars have concluded that contemporary television families are little different from their 1950s counterparts. According to this position, television family relationships remain characterized by mutual affection, involvement, and concern; family life continues to be played out in explicit ease and comfort, reflecting an established ideology of achievement and success. In contrast, critics argue that, not only have family relationships become highly conflictual, but contemporary parents, especially fathers, lack both authority and good sense, and modern children are undisciplined and disrespectful.

Because almost all discussion of television families has focused on those depicted in domestic comedy, it is unlikely that opinion is divided as a function of program type. Indeed, observers disagree even when discussing the same family. It is more likely that beliefs about the family on television are systematically influenced by researchers' points of view. Specifically, content analyses appear to encourage the conclusion that, with rare exception, television family life and relations are warm, respectful, and orderly. Attributional analyses, meanwhile, center on the sense that viewers make of television content and offer considerable evidence of decline in the television family experience, especially that of television children.

MAKING SENSE OF THE TELEVISION FAMILY: A VIEW FROM THE SCREEN

Content analyses suggest that television promotes a traditional family model, in which males behave in instrumental ways and assume the role of primary provider and females behave in expressive ways and assume the roles of nurturer and caregiver. Indeed, even nontraditional families appear to subscribe to conventional family values.

Consistent with this family model, males exhibit behaviors often associated with relational power. For example, compared to wives and mothers, husbands and fathers are more talkative, more likely to act unilaterally, more likely to blame, and more likely to seek compliance from other family members. Likewise, in sibling relations females are less likely than males to use commands and more likely to seek information, to show affection, and to provide reassurance. In both adult and child relations, males are more likely than their female counterparts to use reasoning during conflict. Finally, parent-child relations are seen to be mutually satisfying in that children are compliant and seek parental attention, whereas parents behave in complementary ways, providing discipline, support, and affection.

In sum, content analysis often suggests that television life is based on a traditional model in which rights and responsibilities are divided on the basis of gender. Perhaps because spousal, parent-child, and sibling relations are noncompetitive, conflict is seen to be comparatively rare and easily resolved. In a larger sense, family relations are judged to be affectionate, involving, and mutually fulfilling. There are only two potential violations of this model: the nature of working-class families and the status of contemporary fathers.

Working-class families are distinguished by a gender inversion. More specifically, working-class males are portrayed as inept, immature, stupid, lacking in good sense, and emotional, and they are increasingly the butts of jokes, especially those told by mothers. Across time, they have become more likely to be judged foolish. At the same time, working-class wives are more likely to be portrayed as relatively intelligent, rational, and responsible. However, although this may not conform to the "Tarzan–Jane" ideology apparent in middle-class television families, working-class families are more cohesive, more helpful, and both friendlier and happier than middle-class families, suggesting that the general effectiveness of the traditional family model is unaffected.

MAKING SENSE OF THE TELEVISION FAMILY: A VIEW FROM THE ARMCHAIR

Attributional analyses (i.e., those based on viewers' interpretation of television content) have suggested that spousal relations have become more egalitarian across time so that, in modern families, spousal rights and responsibilities are more often shared than divided on the basis of gender. In addition, although contemporary spouses were seen as more argumentative, they were also judged more explicitly affectionate and more sexually intimate, implying that spousal relations have become more emotionally expressive and not simply more conflictual. Like earlier spouses, modern couples were defined as mutually involved, trusting, able to manage the routine of day-to-day life, happy, and likely to remain together. Notably, this model of contentment and stability did not generalize to working-class spousal relations, which were seen as comparatively closed, highly conflictual, and unsatisfying.

Attributional analyses found that the evolutionary trajectory of parent-child relations was more ambiguous. Parents and children were seen to have become more involved with each other, more trusting, friendlier, and better able to manage daily life. At the same time, these relationships were rated as more argumentative than in earlier families, and modern parents were judged less able to socialize children effectively.

In contrast to other family relationships, those among siblings were judged to have become significantly distressed over time. Viewers rated contemporary siblings as less trusting, less friendly, more hostile, less able to manage conflict, and less able to socialize each other appropriately. Modern siblings were also seen as less happy together and less likely to remain close in the future than their earlier counterparts.

CONCLUSIONS

The status of the family on television is uncertain. Extant research suggests quite opposite conclusions that appear to depend on perspective. Nonetheless, the meaning and attributional significance of television interaction are determined by the viewer, suggesting that content analysis may yield little insight into viewers' understanding of the television family experience. At the same time, Bryant, Aust, Bryant, and Venugopalan (2001) used established diagnostic criteria to evaluate television family interaction and reported that all families and all individuals were defined as healthy, raising the possibility that the perceptions of distress apparent in attributional analyses may have no clinical basis.

—William Douglas

See also Family, Television Portrayals of; Fathers, Media Portrayals of; Gender Roles on Television; Mothers, Media Portrayals of; Sitcoms

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FAMILY, MEDIA EDUCATION AND

See MEDIA EDUCATION, FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN

FAN CULTURES

A fan culture forms when a group of fans organizes around their shared interest in a media text or personality. The best-known, most visible examples of these cultures include Star Trek fans, Elvis impersonators, and "Dead Heads," or Grateful Dead fans. However, fan cultures exist for an extensive variety of television programs, films, books, comic books, actors, and musicians. Among young people, one can find fan cultures for everything from *Harry Potter* to *The OC.*

Like any culture, organized fan communities operate within a set of norms and rules of behavior. Frequently, behaviors that are acceptable within the fan culture carry a different meaning for the outside observer. For instance, the culture at large may view as aberrant dressing up like a favorite character for a

Young Harry Potter fans, dressed as witches, await the arrival of author J. K. Rowling before a reading of her fifth book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix,* at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Some 4,000 schoolchildren gathered on June 26, 2003, to hear Rowling read from the book five days after it was launched around the world. On the first day, it sold 5 million copies in the United States, breaking sales records previously set by *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.* That record was broken in July 2005 by *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince,* which had first-day sales of 6.9 million in the United States.

SOURCE: © HUGO PHILPOTT/X01570/Reuters/CORBIS; used with permission.

film premiere or fan convention. Within the fan community, however, this costume wearing makes sense as one of the many activities in which fans engage as they enjoy and pay homage to what they love.

STUDIES OF FAN CULTURES

To understand fan cultures, researchers often employ the ethnographic approaches used by anthropologists in the field, including interviews with and observation of members of the culture. In a study of young women fans of *Beverly Hills, 90210,* for instance, E. Graham McKinley watched episodes with groups of fans, observed how they talked to each other about the show, and then interviewed the girls.

Whereas this and other studies have examined fans' talk about the object of their fandom, another area of interest in the study of fan cultures is the role of fans as cultural producers. For example, one study has looked at websites created by girls devoted to teen heartthrob Chad Michael Murray, and another has examined websites created by fans of female-oriented, or *shoujo,* anime (Japanese animated series like *Pokémon* that have become very popular in the United States). Drawing on studies of mostly adult fan cultures, these studies of girls' fan cultures share an interest in fans as active audience members who interpret and use texts in their lives.

In what is considered a seminal work in fan culture research, Henry Jenkins found that fans rework or "poach" the original text to suit their own needs through fan fiction writings—original stories written by fans using a show's characters and universe. Jenkins found themes of resistance to dominant cultural ideologies in these fan works. Other studies, however, including those examining girls' fan cultures, have not found these same themes of resistance. Rather, they have found that these fans focus on the things that typically interest girls: boys, romance, and relationships. This lack of resistance to a "male-oriented" culture does not mean that these girls are not actively using the texts. In fact, these studies find that the girls negotiate their identities within their fan cultures and that they are very active as both interpreters and producers of content.

FAN ACTIVITIES

Prior to widespread use of the Internet, an individual had to join a local, regional, or even national fan club to participate in a fan culture. In addition to local meetings and national conventions, fans communicated with each other through fanzines, independently produced fan magazines distributed through mailing lists. Today, thousands of fanzines exist, and fan conventions are more popular than ever. At the same time, the Web offers fans around the world the ability to instantly connect with and talk to one another 24 hours a day.

The most fundamental activity in which fans engage is talking about the show, personality, group, or text that they love. Fans get together for analysis and debate, most often through website message boards and chat rooms. In the process, they form communities and develop friendships that often extend beyond the world of the fandom that brought them together.

In addition to talking with each other, fans produce and perform for each other. Fanzines are just one example of the materials fans produce and share. Technology has given fans the opportunity to express their creativity in a wide variety of ways. Fans create their own websites; write, read, and critique fan fiction, poetry, and fan songs, known as *filk*; and create fan art and even mini-videos (usually clips from a show set to popular music).

Other activities of fan cultures have also been facilitated by technology. Fans typically spend time acquiring knowledge about the object of their fandom. This knowledge may include everything from episode titles and numbers to background information on the actors, the writers, and anyone else involved in the production. The wealth of information available on the Web makes this data gathering and sharing easier.

Not all fans engage in all of these activities. In fact, most fans probably engage in very few of the activities described here. Researchers have attempted to describe what distinguishes a fan from other audience members based on the level of involvement. Yet, there is another way to look at this issue. In an overview of definitions of fans, Matt Hills points out the importance of the act of identifying oneself as a fan, something that may be particularly important for young people. Youth culture is stratified by genres of music; that is, young people identify one another as belonging to certain groups based on what types of music they like. Teens who are fans of heavy metal typically do not hang out with those who are into hip hop. Thus, identifying oneself as a fan of something may be the most fundamental fan activity.

YOUTH FANS AS CONSUMERS

Thanks to such technologies as the Web as well as the growth of popular media, fan cultures are no longer on the fringes of society. It is easier for fans to participate, and fan cultures are much more visible. At the same time, fans are also more visible to the producers of popular media. Most of the research on fan cultures views fans as active interpreters and producers of content; however, Matt Hills argues that it is important to recognize that fandom is also an act of consumption. This may become especially true as youth media producers recognize the power of the youth audience and the desirability of creating loyal fans for their products.

The official website for one popular teen drama, *Dawson's Creek,* exemplifies the changing climate for youth fans. The show's production company, Sony Pictures Entertainment, courted fans through an elaborate website (www.dawsonscreek.com) that offered fans a ready-made, professionally produced fan community. The multilayered site gave fans the chance to connect and share fan fiction via message boards. It included extensive background information on the characters as well as the actors, the writers, and the creators of the show; it allowed fans to communicate with a member of the production staff; and it included "extra-textual" material related to the show, such as "secret scenes" that were cut from episodes before they aired.

The foregoing list covers only a portion of the content available on the website. The most important aspects of this site for fan cultures is that it provided fans with the types of materials they might have created and sought out on their own, moving them away from their roles as active producers and into those of passive consumers.

—Elizabeth Bandy

See also Internet Use, Social; Media Celebrities; Online Media, Agency and; Youth Culture; Zines

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FANTASY, MEDIA EFFECTS ON

Fantasy is a powerful psychological process that enables human beings to create new ideas and concepts in their minds by building on existing ones. Questions and conjecture about fantasy and its significance for individuals, societies, and cultures have elicited scholarly and public debate throughout history. The question of whether various media, particularly television, have an impact—either positive or negative—on children's creativity, imagination, and play has been the focus of various studies throughout the years. An overview of the research on media effects in this area suggests that the overall negative effects of media on children's creativity, imagination, and fantasy play are stronger than its positive effects. Reception studies of fantasy offer an alternative to media effects research on this topic and suggest ways in which children can creatively use media elements.

Although the range of information available through communication technology and various

media has expanded recently, specific concerns about children and the development of their capabilities for imagination have remained very much the same. The claim that enjoying leisure media, and television viewing in particular, is a passive experience for children—one that suppresses both cognition and imagination—has been a common thread in the public debate. From this perspective, the child viewer is but a passive receptacle; the visual nature of media such as television, video and computer games, and the Internet, is thought to rob children of the opportunity to form images in their own minds as they do when reading books. At the same time, any casual observer of children's everyday lives can attest that media content is deeply integrated in children's imaginations and fantasy play.

CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION

Several early correlation studies as well as experimental ones found negative relationships between television viewing and children's scores on a variety of creative tasks, such as thinking, problem solving, and writing. Several studies compared children's performance on a variety of tasks before and after the introduction of television into their lives. Although individual studies may be challenged on conceptual or methodological grounds, the accumulative picture coincides with the popular belief that heavy television use, particularly violent television, impedes the development of children's creative abilities.

Several researchers investigated how various media differ as stimuli of creativity and imagination. One area of research focused on whether a televised version of a story stimulates more or fewer creative ideas, story lines, and problem-solving solutions than the same story told verbally (in audio or print forms). These studies confirmed the hypothesis that processes of imagination (operationalized as any form of representational activity that creates new entities such as characters or events) were better stimulated by radio than by television. One explanation offered is that that the *visual superiority effect* of television is confounded in regard to comprehension by the advantages of the auditory–verbal track.

FANTASY PLAY

Studies of the role of television as a stimulant of fantasy play have examined the hypothesis that television viewing may displace free fantasy play (interchangeably termed *pretend, make-believe, or imaginative* play) in young children. Engaging in creative imaginative play is presumed to be essential for children's development and is one of the most important ways in which they learn about their environments. Accumulated research suggests that, ultimately, the types of content children watch are more important in determining outcomes of fantasy and imaginative play than the quantity of time spent viewing. One related finding is that fantasy violence in television content may inhibit or take the place of imaginative play, whereas certain educational, prosocial programming may actually encourage it. For example, viewers of programs oriented toward prosocial behaviors, such as cooperation, expression of empathy, delay of gratifications, ability to express feelings, and the like, have been found to incorporate such behaviors in their play. Several researchers also argue that it makes little sense to deliberate whether one kind of imaginative play induced by television (e.g., playing "school" or a particular profession) is of higher quality and more desirable than another (e.g., playing "war of the good against the evil").

DAYDREAMING

Several researchers have suggested that television's visually concrete presentational forms inhibit children's daydreaming, in comparison to the abstract nature of words in print or spoken language. They assume that the ready-made fantasy world of television does not require significant mental effort and that the fast pace of the programs does not leave room for daydreaming while watching. A competing hypothesis is that television may stimulate program-bound daydreaming; in this view, the daydreaming of heavy viewers of violence, for example, will be preoccupied with aggressive themes and superheroes closely related to their favorite television narratives. No studies have dealt with this area, so there is no evidence to support or deny these competing hypotheses.

RECEPTION STUDIES OF FANTASY

The preceding work on the nature of the relationship between mediated texts and children's fantasy worlds is rooted in the research tradition of media effects. Alternatively, reception studies based on interviews of children along with examination of their stories,

drawings, and other artwork have applied a different research approach that enables children to give voice to their experiences and meanings as they are embedded in their everyday experiences at home, in school, and with friends. One such cross-cultural study demonstrated the centrality of diverse media in children's fantasies. The degree of integration of media material ranged from the very "thick," which included adoption of settings, characters, and plot lines taken from media texts (such as a setting from a Disney movie, Pokémon characters, or a plot line of a cartoon), to "thin" traces, in which a media reference was found to be of peripheral importance to the overall nature of the child's fantasy (such as an adoption of a Superman cape or a television character's name). Further, in fantasizing, children mix and match media elements in ways that facilitate their own fantasy worlds and allow them to best experience their wishes to act in these worlds. They highlight and expand on those aspects of the original media worlds that are particularly attractive to them and adapt or erase those that hinder or are not relevant to the wished-for experience. One might say they play the role of editor as they formulate their own stories, using original elements of their own creation and drawing from mediated materials as needed for the finished product.

—Dafna Lemish

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Effects, Models of; Television, Prosocial Behavior and; Violence, Effects of

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FANTASY–REALITY DISTINCTION

A central concern in the research on children's cognitive development, one that can be traced as far back as Jean Piaget's research, has to do with how children understand the world around them. A key dimension of that understanding is the extent to which children distinguish between fantasy and reality. Both Sigmund Freud and Piaget were concerned with children's ability to distinguish between what was real and what wasn't among thoughts and behaviors that were self-generated. It wasn't until the 1970s that researchers turned systematic attention to studying the extent to which children actually used the categories of "reality" and "fantasy" to make sense of the world around them. The results of several studies around this time showed that the use of these categories increased steadily with age but that even sixth graders did not make the same sorts of distinctions between fantasy and reality that were typical of adults. Although media were not the primary focus of some of this early research, the studies did use pictures of fantasy media characters (i.e., Donald Duck, Big Bird, and Snoopy) in some of the categorization tasks, and their study certainly fueled subsequent research on the importance of the fantasy–reality distinction for children's understanding of media messages.

THE CONCEPT OF FANTASY VERSUS REALITY

In 1977, Robert Hawkins published an influential article that summarized some of the supposed effects of television content that varied as a function of children's perceptions of the reality of that content. However, in his review of this literature, Hawkins noted that measures of perceived reality varied widely and that this fact gave rise to a question about the nature of the concept itself. The remainder of his article was devoted to the conceptual and empirical nature of judgments about the reality of television content and introduced notions that became seminal in the literature. Hawkins introduced four different dimensions that might capture how children conceive the notion of television reality. The first dimension includes a continuum that ranges from perceptions of television content as a "magic window" of reality (where television is simply a separate window in which everything is just as real as events that happen

anywhere else) to perceptions of television content as purely dramatic depictions. A second dimension deals with expectations about life and includes judgments on a continuum that ranges from television events matching social expectations about the world or failing to match those expectations. A third dimension, specificity, involves the possibility that children's perceptions about reality might differ depending upon the level of specificity of the questions that they are asked about television content. Finally, a fourth dimension involves the possibility that children's perceptions of reality might vary depending upon whether those perceptions are about television characters, events, or the usefulness of those characters and events for everyday life. Hawkins gathered some empirical support for these dimensions and made it clear that there were developmental differences in perceptions of television's reality on these dimensions.

Building upon Hawkins' research, John Flavell and his colleagues studied how 3- and 4-year-olds interpreted various television images. They found that 4-year-olds tend to distinguish between real objects and televised depictions of those objects. However, 3-year-olds showed a tendency to perceive televised depictions as real, physical objects. For example, they tended to believe that the juice would come out of a glass that was shown on television if the television set itself were turned upside down. The researchers noted that this sort of judgment error was not confined to televised images but extended to simple two-dimensional photographs. They proposed a four-step developmental sequence to describe how children gradually learn to distinguish between television content that is real or realistic and that which is not.

Daniel Chandler provided a comprehensive overview of the different ways in which scholars following Hawkins have conceptualized and studied the fantasy–reality distinction. One important aspect of the distinction involves *physical actuality*, or the judgment about whether a person or event depicted on television is thought to exist in the real world. This criterion is commonly used by 7-to-8-year-old children as a basis for distinguishing between reality and fantasy. The *possibility* criterion is also often used by children in making the fantasy–reality assessment of media content. Research by Patricia Morison and her colleagues revealed that use of this criterion followed a developmental course, with 5-to-6-year-olds using it less than one fifth of the time to justify their fantasy–reality judgments, 7-to-9-year-olds using it about one third of the time, and 11-to-12-year-olds using it nearly half the time.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Probably the most important practical line of research to develop around children's perceptions of fantasy and reality of media depictions was initiated by Joanne Cantor and her colleagues. Cantor assumed that children's emotional reactions to potentially frightening media depictions were closely connected to their cognitive perceptions, judgments, and interpretations of the characters and events featured in those depictions. This assumption is well grounded in cognitive psychology. In writing about the nature of emotion, Nico Frijda described the *law of apparent reality* by observing that, to the extent that people think about events as real, they tend to experience a more intense emotional reaction to those events. Cantor's studies, guided initially by Piaget's developmental theory, have focused on documenting the nature of developmental differences in children's perceptions of the reality of media depictions and using those differences to predict and understand the presence and intensity of fright reactions that children experience as a consequence of media exposure.

One practical finding to emerge from Cantor's studies is that young children, particularly in the preschool years, tend to perceive as real many of the characters and events that older children perceive as belonging to the world of fantasy. Consequently, whereas older children are more likely to experience fright at media depictions that show real threats and possible harms from real-world events, younger children tend to experience fear of a whole class of characters (e.g., the Incredible Hulk and wicked witches) and events (e.g., visual transformations) that older children and adults regard as pure fantasy and consequently quite harmless.

Future research on the fantasy–reality distinction promises to include more studies that seek to understand the nuances of children's perceptions of media content. In addition, research on individual differences may reveal that adolescents and adults differ according to the level of perceived reality ascribed to media content and consequently in the ways in which they experience the effects of exposure to that content.

—*Glenn Sparks*

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Fantasy, Media Effects on

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FATHERS, MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF

Since the inception of television, programs and commercials have dramatized the family, delivering the trials and joys of domestic life to the living rooms of viewers often watching in the company of family members of their own. It is interesting to isolate for close scrutiny the depiction of one particular family member, the television father. From Ward Cleaver to Mike Brady and from Bill Cosby to Homer Simpson, the television father has been known to take on the status of cultural icon. Sometimes viewed as the "head of the household," his portrayal seems especially central to the family as a whole.

Slow shifts have taken place in society at large, in which the division of parenting and housework responsibilities between women and men has begun to be slightly more balanced. Portrayals of the television father can reveal much about gender roles and cultural norms. To some extent, media portrayals of men's family roles reflect increases in household responsibilities shouldered by real-life fathers and husbands, but gender stereotypes remain.

THE SITCOM FATHER

The contemporary sitcom father often seems to struggle with his role as a parent and husband. Humor is furnished through his missteps, occasionally met with derision from other characters. Frequently short tempered and short of common sense, sage advice, or tact, the recent sitcom father has been described as a buffoon. Of course, conflict and shortcomings are the stuff of situation comedies. Yet, when considering how portrayals have changed over the years, a case can be made that fathers have gone from "knowing best" to knowing little.

Changes Over Time

The proportion of humorous interactions occurring at the expense of the father increased from the 1950s through the 1990s, according to a content analysis conducted by Erica Scharrer. The recent sitcom father is on the receiving end of humor (i.e., being made fun of) more often than in decades past. There is additional evidence that the sitcom mother has wrested the comedic upper hand from the father. In sitcoms airing in the 1950s, jokes told by the father at the expense of the mother outpaced the reverse by 3:1. In the 1990s, the mother was making fun of the father at a rate better than 2:1. There was also a consistent trend over time toward sitcom fathers who could be characterized as foolish, unintelligent, or inept. Thus, contemporary sitcom dads (like Ray Romano's character on *Everybody Loves Raymond*, Peter Griffin on *Family Guy*, or Hank Hill on *King of the Hill*) tend to be portrayed as less successful than sitcom fathers of the past (like Ward Cleaver of *Leave It to Beaver* or Mr. Cunningham of *Happy Days*).

Blue-Collar Dads

The social class of the sitcom family also appears to make a difference in how the father is depicted. Muriel Cantor has argued that domestic comedies featuring

working-class families (*The Honeymooners, All in the Family, Roseanne*) present the father figure as more foolish than comedies featuring middle- or upper-class families (*Leave It to Beaver, Father Knows Best, The Cosby Show*). Richard Butsch has observed that the working-class family man on sitcoms can best be described as a buffoon whose stupidity is a frequent source of laughter. In Scharrer's study, the socioeconomic status of the family helped to dictate the level of foolishness of the portrayal of the sitcom father. Her content analysis shows nearly twice as many jokes told at the expense of the father in working-class families, as compared to upper-class families.

FATHERS IN COMMERCIALS

Progress has been made in terms of the number of males depicted in commercials as parents or as performing household chores. Yet, men remain more likely to be shown employed outside the home, whereas women are more likely to be shown working within the home in roles as spouses or parents. Gayle Kaufman's content analysis of men's family roles in commercials reveals a number of further persisting inequities. Father and husband characters do just one quarter of all of the cooking shown and an estimated 20% of the housework and grocery shopping. Whereas father characters are seen playing with their children more than mothers are, care-providing activities (such as giving medicine to or feeding children) are performed twice as often by mothers than by fathers.

Kaufman observes that, when father characters perform household chores such as cooking or caring for children, they frequently have difficulty with these tasks. Examples of such commercial depictions include fathers sending children out in summer clothes during winter weather, or ordering takeout when mothers are not around because they are unable to cook. This tendency was further evident in an additional study of prime-time television commercials in which the failures of fathers and husbands at domestic chores (much more common than the corresponding failures of mothers and wives) were frequently presented as sources of humor.

CONCLUSION

Not just in situation comedies and television commercials, but also in other television genres and additional media forms, the depiction of the father these days seems to be one of a bumbling buffoon. Movie plots, for instance, often involve fathers who are faced with sudden, sole responsibility for child care and housework but lack the necessary skills (e.g., *Mr. Mom, Three Men and a Baby,* or *Big Daddy*). However, despite the foolish tendencies of modern and working-class sitcom fathers, they often ultimately succeed. Their paths to parenting decisions are often plagued with problems, but typically a positive resolution prevails, and their love for their wives and children is apparent. Clearly, portrayals of fathers in the media are complex and multifaceted.

Media portrayals of family members and how those portrayals change or remain stable over time can be read in relationship to shifts in the cultural climate. The real world has experienced a number of changes within the family in terms of composition and the roles undertaken by family members inside the home and out. Some of those transformations are apparent in media depictions of fathers, and others lag behind. Still others appear on the surface to mark progress away from domestic gender stereotypes. Yet, the subtler message of comic failure when husbands and fathers attempt household and parenting tasks may serve to reinforce gender stereotypes by suggesting an innate lack of suitability for these roles.

—Erica Scharrer

See also Family, Television Portrayals of; Family Relationships, Television and; Gender Roles on Television; Mothers, Media Portrayals of

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FEAR REACTIONS

Children and adults often feel fear while being exposed to the media, and that fear can last for varying lengths of time after the exposure. Violence is a typical source of media-induced fears, but other images and themes also provoke fear in viewers, and there are important developmental differences in this regard. A good deal of research evidence has accumulated on the prevalence of media-induced fears, the consequences of exposure to fear-evoking messages, the types of stimuli that evoke fear in different age groups, and the coping strategies that are most effective in reducing the emotional disturbance.

THE PREVALENCE OF FRIGHT REACTIONS TO TELEVISION AND FILMS

Studies of children's nightmares and anxieties produced by media have been reported since the 1930s, starting with movies, then moving to radio crime drama in the 1940s and finally to television in the 1950s. Anecdotes about intense reactions to popular movies such as *Jaws* and *The Exorcist* were prevalent in newspapers in the 1970s, and psychiatric case studies of intense reactions by individuals, sometimes even requiring hospitalization, began appearing at that time. More recent studies confirm that fright responses to movies, television programs, and the news are quite common.

Correlational studies also show that children who watch more television are at higher risk for experiencing anxiety and sleep disturbances.

Two studies of adults' memories of having been frightened by a television show or movie found that many people experience intense fear reactions years after exposure to frightening images in media stories. In both these studies, the presence of vivid memories of enduring fear was nearly universal among college undergraduates. Both studies reported that generalized anxiety, mental preoccupation, fear of specific things or situations, and sleep disturbances are quite common consequences of exposure to the media. Moreover, in a study by Kristen Harrison and Joanne Cantor, one third of the students who reported having been frightened said that the fear effects had lasted more than a year. More than one fourth of the respondents said that the emotional impact of the program or movie (viewed an average of 6 years earlier) was still with them at the time of reporting.

A recent study explored the enduring effects of specific, well-known movies in detail. Joanne Cantor collected more than 500 class papers written by students about their own fright reactions to television programs or movies. She analyzed the content of papers written about the movies cited most frequently

(*Poltergeist, Jaws, The Blair Witch Project,* and *Scream*) and noted how often the anxiety provoked by these movies had changed people's subsequent behavior in real life. Overall, 46% of these students said that the movie had caused nightmares or other sleep disturbances, and 75% reported that it had influenced some area of their waking life. Among the prominent effects on waking life were difficulty swimming after *Jaws;* uneasiness around clowns, televisions, and trees after *Poltergeist;* avoidance of camping and the woods following *The Blair Witch Project;* and anxiety when home alone after *Scream.* More than a third of the students reported effects continuing to the present. What is striking about these responses is that they often continued even after the individuals realized that their responses were irrational. For example, almost as many people who said they were afraid to swim in the ocean after seeing *Jaws* also said they were uncomfortable in lakes and pools, even though they fully understood that these venues pose no danger from sharks. These types of responses attest to the enduring power of emotional memory to reinstate the physiological symptoms of fear even when the person knows at a rational level that he or she is not in danger. Recent research on the neurophysiology of fear demonstrates how indelibly traumatic memories are stored in the brain.

AGE DIFFERENCES IN MEDIA STIMULI THAT FRIGHTEN

Researchers have found that different elements in media messages frighten children of different ages. Using experiments based on principles of cognitive development, these researchers have tested controlled variations in program content and viewing conditions. For ethical reasons, only short excerpts from relatively mild stimuli are used in experiments to observe changes in children's behavior, facial expressions of emotion, physiological responses, and self-reported feelings. To complement these studies, surveys have explored children's responses to more intensely frightening fare to which they were exposed in their natural environments.

The Diminishing Effect of Appearance

As children mature cognitively, their fear reactions are triggered by different types of things in media portrayals. For example, preschool children (approximately 3 to 5 years old) are more likely to be frightened by something that looks scary but is actually harmless than by something that looks attractive but is actually harmful. In contrast, older elementary school children (approximately 9 to 11 years) are not as affected by something that looks scary but are much more influenced by the behavior or destructive potential of a character, animal, or object.

In a survey that asked parents to name the programs and films that had frightened their children the most, parents of preschool children most often mentioned shows with grotesque-looking, unreal characters, such as the television series *The Incredible Hulk* and the feature film *The Wizard of Oz*; parents of older elementary school children more often mentioned programs or movies that involved threats without a strong visual component and that required a good deal of imagination to comprehend. A laboratory study then explored responses to *The Incredible Hulk* in more depth and found that preschool children's unexpectedly intense reactions to this program were partially due to their over-response to the visual image of the Hulk character. When children were shown a shortened episode of the program and were asked how they had felt during different scenes, preschool children reported the most fear after the attractive, mild-mannered hero was transformed into the monstrous-looking Hulk. Older elementary school children, in contrast, reported the least fear at this time, because they understood that the Hulk was really the benevolent hero in another physical form, and that he was using his superhuman powers to rescue a character in danger.

Another study tested the effect of appearance more directly, by creating a story in four versions, so that a major character was either attractive and grandmotherly/motherly-looking or ugly and grotesque. The character's appearance varied with her behavior—she was depicted as behaving either kindly or cruelly. In judging how nice or mean the character was and in predicting what she would do in the subsequent scene, preschool children were more influenced than older children (6 to 7 years and 9 to 10 years) by the character's looks and less influenced than older children by her kind or cruel behavior. As the age of the child increased, the character's looks became less important, and her behavior increased in importance.

The Emerging Distinction Between Fantasy and Reality

As children mature, they not only avoid being frightened by characters' physical features, they also are less responsive to fantastic dangers depicted in the media. They become more adept at distinguishing reality from fantasy and are more influenced by depictions they regard as real. Surveys of parents' reports of their children's responses are consistent with this developmental trend. In general, the tendency to mention fantasy offerings (depicting events that could *not* possibly occur in the real world) as sources of fear decreases as the child's age increases, and the tendency to mention fictional offerings, depicting events that can *possibly* occur, increases. Further support for this developmental trend comes from studies of elementary school children's fright responses to television news, which show that fear induced by news stories increases with age.

Increasing Susceptibility to Abstract Concepts

As children mature, increasingly abstract concepts have the capacity to frighten them. This conclusion is illustrated by findings from a survey of children's responses to the television movie *The Day After,* which depicted the devastation of a Kansas community by a nuclear attack. In a random telephone survey of parents conducted the night after the broadcast of this movie, the level of fear reportedly produced by the movie increased with age. The findings seem to be due to the fact that the emotional impact of the film comes from the contemplation of the potential annihilation of the Earth as we know it—a concept that is beyond the grasp of the young child.

In summary, research on the relationship between cognitive development and emotional responses to media helps predict the types of television programs and movies that are more or less likely to frighten children of different ages. In addition to providing empirical tests of the relationship between cognitive development and affective responses, these developmental findings can help parents and other caregivers make more sensible viewing choices for children.

AGE DIFFERENCES IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COPING STRATEGIES

Developmental differences in children's information processing abilities result in differences in the effectiveness of strategies to prevent or reduce their media-induced fears. In general, preschool children benefit more from *noncognitive* than from *cognitiv*e strategies; both cognitive and noncognitive strategies can be effective with older elementary school children, although older children tend to prefer cognitive strategies.

Noncognitive Strategies

Noncognitive strategies are those that do not involve the processing of verbal information and that appear to be relatively automatic. The process of visual desensitization, or gradual exposure to threatening images in a nonthreatening context, is one such strategy that has been shown to be effective for preschool and older elementary school children. In several experiments, prior exposure to filmed footage of snakes, still photographs of worms, rubber replicas of spiders, and live lizards reduced children's fear responses to movie scenes featuring similar creatures. In addition, fear reactions to the Hulk character in *The Incredible Hulk* were reduced by exposure to footage of the actor who plays the character having his makeup applied so that he gradually took on the menacing appearance of the character. None of these studies reported age developmental differences in the effectiveness of desensitization techniques.

Another noncognitive strategy that has been shown to have more appeal and more effectiveness for younger children than for older ones is covering one's eyes during frightening portions of a presentation. In one experiment, for example, when covering the eyes was suggested as an option, younger children used this strategy more often than older children. Moreover, the suggestion of this option reduced the fear of younger children but actually increased the fear of older children.

Other noncognitive strategies involve physical activities, such as clinging to an attachment object or having something to eat or drink. Adults expect these physical techniques to work better for younger than older children, and younger children report using them more often.

Cognitive Coping Strategies

In contrast to noncognitive strategies, cognitive strategies involve verbal information that casts the threat in a different light. These strategies involve relatively complex cognitive operations, and research consistently finds such strategies to be more effective

for older children than for younger ones. Data also indicate that older children use cognitive coping strategies more frequently than preschool children and expect them to be more effective.

The most typical cognitive strategy for dealing with fantasy depictions seems to be to provide an explanation focusing on the unreality of the situation. This strategy is especially difficult for preschool children, who do not fully grasp the implications of the fantasy–reality distinction. In one experiment, older elementary school children who were told to remember that what they were seeing in *The Wizard of Oz* was not real ended up displaying less fear than their classmates who received no instructions. The same instructions did not help preschoolers, however.

For media depictions involving realistic threats, the most prevalent cognitive strategy seems to be to provide an explanation that minimizes the perceived severity of the depicted danger. This type of strategy is not only more effective with older children than with younger children, in certain situations it has been shown to have a fear-enhancing effect, rather than an anxiety-reducing effect, with younger children. In an experiment involving the snake pit scene from *Raiders of the Lost Ark,* prior reassuring information about snakes (e.g., the statement that most snakes are not poisonous) tended to reduce the fear of older elementary school children. However, kindergarten and first-grade children seem to have only partially understood the information, responding to the word *poisonou*s more intensely than to the word *not.* For them, the supposedly reassuring information increased their fear.

Research has explored some of the specific reasons for the inability of young children to profit from verbal explanations, such as those involving relative quantifiers (e.g., "Some are dangerous, but most are not") and probabilistic terms (e.g., "This probably will not happen to you"). It is clear from these studies that it is an extremely challenging task to explain away threats that have induced fear in a child, particularly when there is a strong perceptual component to the threatening stimulus, and when the reassurance can only be partial or probabilistic rather than absolute.

Because it is so difficult to reassure young children who are scared, Cantor published a children's book to illustrate what research has found to be the most effective techniques in reducing young children's fears. In *Teddy's TV Troubles,* a little bear who is scared by something on TV turns to his mother for reassurance. Acknowledging that *words don't always work,* the mother bear leads Teddy through a series of noncognitive coping strategies that, in the end, successfully reassure him.

SHIELDING CHILDREN FROM HARM

As television and movies have become more intense and more graphic in their depictions, parents have sought ways to take more control over their children's exposure to media. The movie rating system developed in the late 1960s by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) has undergone several modifications in response to parents' wishes. In addition, in the late 1990s Congress mandated the manufacture of V-chips in new televisions to permit parents to block programs on the basis of ratings, and the television industry developed a TV rating system designed to work with this new technology. These innovations are only part of the solution, however. Parental education on the effects of the media and media literacy education for children are also critical for preserving children's mental health in today's media environment.

—Joanne Cantor

See also Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Cognitive Development, Media and; Developmental Differences, Media and; Movies, Perceived Realism of; Movies, Violence in; News, Children's Responses to; Television Violence; V-Chip (Violence Chip)

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC), ADVERTISING AND

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), an independent administrative agency established by the U.S. Congress in the Communications Act of 1934, has jurisdiction to regulate electronic media in the United States, including television, radio, and cable but not the Internet. The FCC enforces rules that limit advertising and other commercial content in children's television programming. The FCC also enforces rules that ban advertising for tobacco products on regulated electronic media and prohibit some forms of gambling advertising on licensed broadcast radio and television stations.

ADVERTISING IN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

In the Children's Television Act of 1990, Congress limited advertising in children's programming to no more than 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays for television broadcasters and cable operators. In response, the FCC made rules in 1991 enforcing these limits and defined *children's programming* in the rule as "[programming] originally produced and broadcast primarily to an audience of children 12 years old and younger." The rule's limits broadly apply to "commercial matter" including paid advertising for products and services. Long-standing FCC policy recommends adequate separation between program content and commercial messages in children's programming to better enable children to distinguish between content and advertising.

When a children's program is associated with a product that is advertised during that program, the entire program can be deemed a "program-length commercial," which qualifies as "commercial matter" subject to the per-hour limits of the FCC rule. For example, the FCC found that a 30-minute cartoon based on the G.I. Joe character became a program-length commercial when a television station aired two advertisements for G.I. Joe toys during the program. The station was fined for exceeding the per-hour limits for advertising during children's programming. The FCC also prohibits *host selling*, which occurs, for instance, when characters in a children's program endorse products or services during the program. The FCC revised its rules in 2005 and restricted the use of commercial websites during children's television programming, but the effective date of these provisions was stayed and remained pending in June 2006.

TOBACCO, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE, AND GAMBLING ADVERTISING

Advertising legal but harmful products on television is an issue of concern from the perspective of protecting children and adolescents. The FCC currently enforces federal statutory bans on advertising for cigarettes, small cigars, and smokeless tobacco on all regulated electronic media. However, there is no ban on advertising alcoholic beverages on regulated electronic media.

The FCC also enforces a federal statutory ban on advertising for lotteries and games of chance on broadcast radio and television stations. Exemptions allow advertising for state-operated lotteries and legalized gambling operated by Native American Indian tribes, among other exemptions. However, in response to a 1999 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, the FCC quit enforcing the ban on broadcast television and radio advertising of legalized gambling in private casinos.

—R. Michael Hoefges

See also Action for Children's Television (ACT); Advertising, Host Selling and; Advertising, Program-Length Commercials in; Advertising, Regulation of; Advertising on Children's Programs; Children's Television Act of 1990; Federal Communications Commission, Deregulation of Children's Programming and; Regulation, Radio; Regulation, Television

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, DEREGULATION OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING AND

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), an independent agency established by the U.S. Congress in the Communications Act of 1934, has jurisdiction to regulate electronic media in the United States, including broadcast television. In 1974, on petition filed by an advocacy group, the FCC declined to adopt rules for children's television programming. In 1984, the FCC reaffirmed nonregulation of children's programming amidst the deregulatory atmosphere of the Reagan administration. Ultimately, Congress passed the Children's Television Act (CTA) of 1990 and required the FCC to limit advertising in children's television programming and to consider whether broadcasters were adequately serving the educational and informational needs of children in their markets before the FCC renewed broadcasters' licenses.

NONREGULATION IN THE 1970s

In 1971, the FCC initiated an inquiry and rule-making proceeding in response to a petition by the advocacy group Action for Children's Television (ACT). ACT petitioned the FCC to ban commercial sponsorship of children's television programs and to require television broadcasters to include a weekly quota of programming for children ages 12 years and younger during specified hours of the day. In a 1974 report and policy statement, the FCC agreed with ACT that broadcast television licensees have a duty to serve the public interest, which includes serving the educational and informational needs of children. However, the FCC declined to adopt children's television rules at that time.

The FCC concluded that banning commercial sponsorship of children's programming would eliminate a primary source of economic support and incentive to broadcast children's programs. Instead of a rule, the FCC chose to rely on continued industry self-regulation of children's television advertising but cautioned broadcasters that the agency would monitor children's programming for excessive commercialization. The FCC also cautioned television broadcasters to maintain adequate separation between content and advertising in children's programming.

The FCC also declined to adopt mandatory quota or scheduling requirements for children's television programming and concluded that the "commercial marketplace" provided adequate incentive to television broadcasters to provide children's programming. The FCC recommended improved efforts by broadcasters in serving the needs of children and indicated that their individual practices in this area were subject to review during license renewal procedures.

NONREGULATION IN THE 1980S AND CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSE

The FCC terminated the proceedings on the ACT petition in a 1984 report and order and again declined to adopt children's television rules for broadcasters. The FCC reminded commercial television broadcasters of their continued public interest obligation to meet the educational and informational needs of children in their markets but concluded that the availability of alternate sources for children's programming, including videocassettes, pay cable services, and public broadcasting, made mandatory national standards unnecessary.

After President Reagan vetoed children's television legislation in 1988, Congress passed the Children's Television Act of 1990, which imposed per-hour limits on advertising in children's television programming and required the FCC to determine whether television broadcasters were serving the educational

and informational needs of children before it renewed broadcasters' licenses. The FCC adopted rules enforcing these provisions in 1991 and 1996, which effectively ended the FCC policy of nonregulation in the realm of children's television programming.

—R. Michael Hoefges

See also Action for Children's Television (ACT); Advertising, Host Selling and; Advertising, Program-Length Commercials in; Advertising, Regulation of; Advertising on Children's Programs; Children's Television Act of 1990; Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Advertising and; Regulation, Television; V-Chip (Violence Chip).

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FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (FTC)

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is an independent administrative agency established by the U.S. Congress in the FTC Act of 1914 to prevent anticompetitive business practices in the marketplace. In 1938, Congress amended the Act to expand the jurisdiction of the FTC to broadly regulate "unfair and deceptive acts and practices." Other provisions in the FTC Act give the FTC jurisdiction over false advertising for foods, drugs, services, devices, and cosmetics. The FTC has six bureaus, including the Bureau of Consumer Protection, which protects consumers against unfairness, deception, and fraud. Within that bureau, the Division of Advertising Practices enforces federal truth-in-advertising laws and includes children's advertising as a focus of enforcement.

DECEPTION

In 1983, the FTC defined *deception* as a "representation, omission, or practice that is likely to mislead the consumer acting reasonably in the circumstances, to the consumer's detriment." The FTC evaluates potential deception in advertising using the perspective of the reasonable consumer. However, advertising that targets children is evaluated for deception using the perspective of the average child in the targeted group.

The FTC has adopted the conclusion that deception in children's advertising "exploit[s] unfairly a consumer group unqualified by age or experience to anticipate the possibility that representations may be exaggerated or untrue." For example, in one case, the FTC brought action against a toy company over children's advertising that depicted a toy doll dancing in an unrealistic manner. The FTC found the advertisement deceptive based on the conclusion that a reasonable child would likely believe, erroneously, that the toy doll actually could dance as depicted in the advertising.

UNFAIRNESS

In 1980, the FTC defined *unfairness* as an act or practice that causes—or is likely to cause—substantial consumer injury that consumers cannot reasonably avoid and that is not outweighed by countervailing benefits to consumers or competition. Subsequently, Congress incorporated this definition by amendment into the FTC Act in 1994. However, FTC jurisdiction to regulate children's advertising with unfairness enforcement—as opposed to charging deception—remains limited. In 1994, Congress also amended the FTC Act to prohibit the agency from enacting any rule that "[children's] advertising constitutes an unfair act or practice affecting commerce."

In the early 1990s, the FTC used unfairness enforcement to obtain agreements from a number of

companies to limit their advertising of pay-per-call services targeted to children. In 1992 legislation, Congress authorized the FTC to make pay-per-call rules, which now restrict pay-per-call advertising targeted to individuals under the age of 18 years and ban targeting such advertising to children under the age of 12 years. In another case, the FTC closed an unfairness investigation of the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company in 1994, citing lack of evidence of a sufficient connection between the company's "Joe Camel" advertising campaign and underage smoking.

OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2000, the FTC began enforcing the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule, which restricts online collection of personal information from children under the age of 13 years without notice and parental consent. The rule tracks provisions in the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, passed by Congress in 1998. In addition, the FTC has issued reports to Congress regarding the marketing and advertising of alcohol products and violent entertainment (motion pictures, music, and video games) to children but recommended in those reports continued reliance on industry self-regulation with suggested improvements and continued monitoring.

—R. Michael Hoefges

See also Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Advertising, Regulation of; Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Advertising and; Federal Communications Commission, Deregulation of Children's Programming and; Food Advertising, Regulation of

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FIRST AMENDMENT

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. . . ." Courts, legislatures, and legal scholars have written volumes on what this simple phrase means. Generally, adults have full rights to speak and publish what they wish. Children, however, may have somewhat more limited rights. Courts and legislatures have written and interpreted laws to provide additional protection for children, particularly regarding pornographic or indecent material and expressive behavior in schools. Although other areas of concern exist, these two issues are currently the most contentious.

PORNOGRAPHY AND INDECENCY

Indecency on broadcast media has been addressed through legislation and in various judicial rulings. The 1978 Supreme Court case *Federal Communications Commission v. Pacifica Foundation* established that civil punishments were appropriate for broadcasters who broadcast indecent speech during times when children might be in the audience. A radio station in New York played comedian George Carlin's "Filthy Words" monologue, with a warning that it might be offensive to some listeners, at 2 p.m. A father and his son were tuned in, and the father later filed a complaint. The Supreme Court held that this broadcast was indecent.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has established that it is illegal for broadcasters (on over-the-air broadcast stations or on radio) to broadcast indecent content between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. *Indecent content* is defined as depictions or descriptions of sexual or excretory functions. Concerned listeners may file complaints with the FCC, and the FCC may fine the offending broadcaster or, in severe or repeated cases, revoke the broadcaster's license.

Protecting children from online pornography is also a legislative and judicial concern. Online pornography is a multibillion-dollar industry, and it is easy for unsuspecting children to stumble upon sexual content. Congress has twice attempted to control the dissemination of online sexual materials to minors. The first attempt was part of the omnibus Telecommunications Act of 1996, the largest overhaul of the Communications Act of 1934. This legislation, named the Communications Decency Act, or CDA, was struck down by the Supreme Court in the 1997 case of *Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union* as unconstitutionally overbroad.

The second act, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998, or COPPA, has also been struck down for various reasons at various levels of judicial review. The most recent Supreme Court opinion, *Ashcroft v. American Civil Liberties Union,* decided in 2004, found that there might be less restrictive means than COPPA to achieve the government's goal of protecting children from online pornography. The statute was remanded for further consideration by a lower court in light of new technological developments that might provide sufficient protection for minors while minimizing First Amendment encroachment.

However, a federal statute requiring libraries that receive federal funding for Internet access to install filtering software to block pornographic content was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2003 in *United States v. American Library Association.* The Children's Internet Protection Act, or CIPA, was held as a constitutional way for libraries to limit minors' access to online sexual materials. CIPA does not forbid libraries from offering nonfiltered access; it merely says that the federal government will not subsidize that access. Consenting adults may request that the software be disabled if they wish to access blocked content.

While not expressly intended to control the amount of sexual content consumed by minors, the V-chip, mandated in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 for all televisions 13 inches or larger, can be configured to block sexual themes. The voluntary ratings developed by broadcasters include a rating for sexual activity and themes.

EXPRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

There are two opposing legal perspectives on the regulation of student expression in schools, colleges, and universities. The first, more permissive perspective suggests that students have expressive rights similar to those of adults. The lead Supreme Court case in this perspective is *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District,* decided in 1969. Several students who wore black armbands to school in protest of the Vietnam War were suspended. The Court found that administrative officials could not forbid the expression of opinion within schools without showing that it does something more than elicit mere discomfort or displeasure with the opinion itself. As long as the expression does not interfere with school activities, it is protected.

The second, less permissive perspective provides less protection for students' expression, particularly when published in school newspapers. In *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier,* decided by the Supreme Court in 1988, administrators removed stories about teen pregnancy and other sensitive issues from a high school newspaper. The Court said that this newspaper was not a public forum for expression and that administrators are entitled to censor nonpublic forums such as school newspapers if the censorship is reasonably related to a legitimate pedagogical concern. Elements to consider in determining whether a student publication is a public forum include how much review is performed by faculty advisors or outside parties.

The standard that has developed from these opposing perspectives is that the greater the extent to which a student publication can be considered to be a public forum, the more protection it has against censorship by administrators. Until 2005, most courts did not consider the *Hazelwood* decision applicable to college or university student media. Two federal circuit courts were on record saying that *Hazelwood* either was not applicable or had little application to college media.

However, in 2005, the Seventh Circuit held that *Hazelwood* might have some application to university student publications. In *Hosty v. Carter,* in finding that a dean did not have liability when she ordered the printer of the Governors State College student newspaper not to print the newspaper until officials had approved it, the court said that the law was not sufficiently established for the dean to have known whether censoring the newspaper was a First Amendment violation. The court did not explicitly apply *Hazelwood*, but it did state that *Hazelwood* might well apply to a nonpublic forum newspaper, even at the college level. The students appealed to the Supreme Court, but in February 2006 the Court declined to hear the case.

The law is unsettled in the areas of protecting children from sexual content and judging the amount of protection available to children's free expression. In coming years, courts and legislatures will continue to struggle with the questions raised by the cases outlined here. It is probably safe to predict that some law restricting minors' access to online sexual content will eventually be passed and found to be constitutional, as the topic remains a hot political issue. However, it is more difficult to predict whether that law will be COPPA or a new, more narrowly written one. It is equally difficult to predict the amount of protection student media will receive, given the intense interest from school administrators, faculty advisors, and student journalists in the outcome of *Hosty* at the Seventh Circuit. *Hosty* reopens for consideration the application of *Hazelwood* to student media at the college level and reaffirms the notion that a publication at any academic level that is considered to be a nonpublic forum is much less likely to be protected against censorship by administrators.

—Genelle Belmas

See also Advertising, Regulation of; Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Advertising and; Internet Pornography, Effects of; Pornography, Internet; Pornography, Regulation of

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FOOD ADVERTISING, CONTENT IN

The content of food advertising targeting children and adolescents has remained startlingly stable over the past 30 years. Although various modes of advertising to children exist, television has been the predominant mode of persuasive appeals. Since the 1970s, about 50% of ads on television have been devoted to food advertising. Unhealthy foods, such as sugared cereals, candy, and conveniently packaged meals, prevail in advertising, and there are relatively few, if any, advertisements for foods that qualify as "healthy." Food ads typically employ fun and happiness appeals to sell their products rather than describing the nutritional value. Caucasian and minority characters in ads better approximate gender and ethnic groups in contemporary society than in previous years. Rather than providing useful information about the product to audience members, ads targeting children often include unclear disclosures and disclaimers, as in the "part of a complete breakfast" feature of ads targeting children.

PRODUCT TYPES

In the 1970s, Earle Barcus conducted a seminal study on television advertising targeting children, finding that 64% of all ads related to food products. This trend held relatively constant during the late 1980s and 1990s, when two other research teams found similar results, except that ads for toys seemed to have overtaken the candy and snack categories. This slight shift in ad distribution was attributed to marketers' increased use of toy product tie-ins with children's programs following the Federal Communications Commission's deregulation of program-length commercials.

One study estimates that children are exposed annually to as many as 11,000 television advertisements for low-nutrition foods. The overwhelming majority of food products advertised are highly sugared products, such as cereals, candy, snacks, cookies, and drinks.

Some studies have suggested that as few as 31% of food ads directed toward children contain health claims. A study of the actual nutritional content of food depicted in network television ads revealed that 97.5% of foods advertised during Saturday-morning programming and 78.3% of foods advertised on Saturday-evening programming were unhealthy, where *unhealthy* was defined as containing more than 30% fat, more than 360 milligrams sodium, more than 35 milligrams cholesterol, and more than 33% sugar, of the total calories. The sheer number of ads and unhealthy foods represented in ads has been of concern to child advocates and health-care researchers because of young children's inability to discern persuasive intent in ads, and because of the burgeoning issue of child-onset obesity, which leads to numerous health problems in adulthood.

PERSUASIVE APPEALS

Companies use several strategies to attract children's attention to ads. The use of fantasy themes is one such approach. Examples of this type of strategy are an ad for cereal showing children sliding down a mountain of cereal and a depiction of kids being whisked into a tunnel of fruit flavor after they try the product. Such tactics increase the likelihood of attracting children's attention. Whereas many adult advertisements explain the primary benefit or advantage of a product over others, ads targeting children rely heavily on themes of fun and happiness in their attempts to persuade. Children are commonly shown using or consuming the product and having endless amounts of fun, and often the product is shown only momentarily, if at all. The happiness theme, rather than claims about the product itself, is at the forefront of the commercial. For example, one version of an ad for McDonald's shows an animated version of Ronald McDonald walking around the world as a Pied Piper of sorts, with people stopping their activities to join him and have a good time. Another tactic used in ads targeting children is to emphasize the extraordinary taste, flavor, and smell of the product. An example of this strategy is a cereal ad that claims to taste better than real apples because the product tastes "cinnamony sweet."

CHARACTER REPRESENTATIONS

Ethnic representation in ads targeting children has become more equitable in recent years. In the 1970s, Caucasians constituted more than half of all characters, minority representation was only a small percentage—less than 10%—and a combination of ethnicities was used in approximately 30% of total food ads. Minority characters portrayed in ads were often relegated to supporting or stereotypical roles rather than being cast as the main character. More recent studies show that minority characters are more likely to be cast in lead roles than in previous years, and in some cases may be represented in proportions similar to their representation in the general population. During the 1970s, boys typically outnumbered girls three to one in commercials, especially when products were gender specific, such as action figures for boys. More recently, however, there appeared to be equal representation among boys and girls in ads.

DISCLOSURES AND DISCLAIMERS

Disclosures such as "part of a balanced breakfast" are frequently used in children's food ads. Disclosures and disclaimers are used to provide information about the product that would otherwise be unknown to audience members so that they can make informed decisions about the product. Studies show that, despite the recurrent appearance of such disclosures in ads, most children under the age of 8 years are unable to comprehend their meaning as stated. When disclosures are reworded in more child-friendly language, comprehension of the disclosures tends to increase.

—Carmen Stitt

See also Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Eating Habits, Media Influence on; Food Advertising, Influence of; Food Advertising to Children; Media Literacy, Aims and Purposes of; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in

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FOOD ADVERTISING, EATING DISORDERS AND

Advertising to kids, especially food and beverage marketing, is big business. The media have often been criticized for promoting unhealthy food products and beverages to entice children. The increasing frequency of diagnosed eating disorders among children and youth is a cause of great public concern, and youth obesity has become a major social problem in information societies worldwide. Although research shows that a number of biological, psychological, familial, and sociocultural factors can influence the onset of an eating disorder, in recent years food advertisers and the media have received much of the blame.

FOOD ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN

At the turn of the 21st century, advertisers in the United States spent approximately $12 billion annually targeting the youth market; marketers spent more than $1 billion in measured media alone, with in excess of $4.5 billion spent on promotional efforts that target youth by using sampling, coupons, contests, sweepstakes, and similar techniques. Another $2 billion is devoted to public relations efforts targeting children and adolescents, the building of school relationships, and event marketing.

One of the largest product categories marketed to youth today is food and beverages. Annual advertising expenditures for U.S. food products accounted for $7.3 billion by the year 2000. To place this issue in perspective, the U.S. Department of Agriculture spends approximately $333 billion per year on nutritional education, whereas annual advertising expenditures for confectionary and snack foods alone total at least $1 billion. Food marketers acknowledge the importance of targeting youth and developing positive, long-lasting brand relationships with both children and parents to create brand loyalty in the future. Highlighting this importance, marketers spend just over $3 billion annually to design food product packaging that children will want to purchase.

Critics of advertising junk food to children fault the use of attractive spokescharacters—as well as the use of color, humor, music, and fast-paced presentations—to persuade children to consume. They allege that children often make bad food choices because of the cross-promotional marketing schemes of food and entertainment companies; for example, linking SpongeBob SquarePants with Kraft Macaroni and Cheese or using Nickelodeon characters as toys in and promoters of McDonald's Happy Meals. Critics also cite as problematic the sheer volume of advertisements children view on a daily basis, especially television commercials. Recent estimates are that today's child views between 20,000 and 40,000 television commercials each year. According to Kunkel and Gantz, food products make up roughly half the ads viewed by adolescents. Sugar-laden cereals are the most frequently advertised product on television; other food products often marketed during youth television programming include candy, snacks, cookies, and sodas. In contrast, very few commercials promote healthy food options such as fruits and vegetables. In summary, snack, convenience, and fast foods dominate advertising to children, especially during the television programs children watch the most.

Although television is the medium most heavily consumed by children, other popular media outlets target youth with junk-food ads. Product placements in video games, television shows, and movies are increasingly common, as is the use of global positioning satellites (GPS) capable of reaching children with one-to-one advertising. Moreover, toy manufacturers are collaborating with food companies to provide Jell-O, Barbie, or Easy Bake Oven Little Debbie snack cake kitchens, making food name brands more recognizable to youth. Children now receive promotional offers for junk food through direct mail at home and as spam in their email. School-related food promotions and fund-raisers, as well as vending machines and nationally advertised fast food companies in school cafeterias, complete a food-saturated advertising environment some kids obviously cannot resist.

EATING DISORDERS

The prevalence of eating disorders affecting adolescents and teens is rising at an alarming rate in the United States and other postindustrial countries. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, more than 5 million Americans suffer from eating disorders each year; the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders suggests that this number is closer to 8 million. Females account for 9 out of 10 people with eating disorders. The Center for Mental Health Services estimates that

95% of those who have eating disorders are women between the ages of 12 and 25. Although eating disorders typically begin in the teen years, studies now show that eating disorders have been documented in children as young as 8 years old.

The two most commonly diagnosed eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia. Both eating disorders can cause bodily harm and mental despair—and in severe cases, even death. Anorexia nervosa is characterized by the refusal to eat enough food to maintain body weight at the minimum for age and height. Sufferers experience an intense fear of gaining weight. Bulimia often entails a pattern of bingeing (eating large quantities of food in small time intervals) followed by vomiting behavior or purging, the use of laxatives, fasting, or overexercising.

THE INFLUENCE OF FOOD ADVERTISING AND MEDIA

The relationship between mass media and eating disorders has been frequently studied in communication and health. Many researchers have attempted to establish a link between the frequency of viewing unrealistic, hyper-thin models and characters and feelings of dissatisfaction with personal weight and body image or have examined media exposure with respect to perceptions of the relationship between thinness and success or success and beauty. Studies show that media do not adequately represent average body frames. Media often portray unrealistically thin media characters that young girls, in particular, desire to emulate. Harrison and Cantor (1997) found that adolescent females who watch more television are more dissatisfied with their bodies. Adolescent females who watch a lot of television are also more likely to show symptoms of eating disorders than are females who view less television. According to officials in Fiji, a sudden increase in anorexia and bulimia coincided with the arrival of television in their country.

Reading women's magazines is also a strong predictor of body image problems. A study by the National Institute on Media and the Family found that women's magazines showcase 10 and 12 times as many advertisements and articles on weight loss as men's magazines do. Levine (1998) reported that 46% of girls in the 5th through 12th grades reported wanting to lose weight because of magazine images; 69% of girls in the same sample reported that magazine pictures influenced their impression of the ideal body shape.

To counteract the rising number of eating disorders, the U.S. government is now recommending cuts in food advertising to children and emphasizing the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise in maintaining an average body weight. Whether this strategy will be effective in counteracting prevailing trends in advertising and youth obesity has yet to be determined.

—Courtney Carpenter and Jennings Bryant

See also Advertising, Body Image and; Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Food Advertising, Obesity and

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FOOD ADVERTISING, GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND AGE

According to *Advertising Age*, U.S. advertising spending for food, beverages, and candy in 2004 was approximately $6.8 billion, placing it sixth highest among all product categories. Some researchers have suggested that advertising for food products accounts for as much 10 to 15 commercials per viewer every hour on TV. Because many food advertisers realize that young people are a very important target audience, programming and media geared toward children and adolescents also tend to contain a high percentage of advertisements for food products. Although much academic and policy research in this area has focused on the nutritional value of the advertised food products in relation to children's health, there have been

some major investigations into the aspects of gender and ethnicity portrayals in TV food advertising targeted toward youth.

In this area, studies involving gender typically have investigated the roles of gender among several dimensions: the main character(s) in the ads, the main product user(s), the announcer, and any stereotypes cast by the products themselves. Most of this research indicates that food advertisements aimed at children tend to skew toward a male-dominated environment. In a study about advertising on children's TV in both the United States and Australia, Beverly A. Browne concluded that gender preferences for males dominated in both countries, although the bias was even greater in the U.S. commercials. The gender preferences displayed in both countries included more male actors, more male product-users, and a greater number of male voice-overs.

A similar study examined advertising on children's TV in both the United States and Great Britain. In keeping with the findings just discussed, Adrian Furnham, Staci Abramsky, and Barrie Gunter discovered that males were more numerous than females in both American and British commercials and that males generally occupied more central or authoritative positions. Although it was a cross-national comparison, the authors found many more similarities than differences between the ads in the two countries. They took this as evidence to suggest that the bias toward male-dominated content actually should be a basic concern the world over, not just in the United States. Furthermore, citing the general concern about children's susceptibility to media messages, the authors contended that the type of gender casting typical in much TV or media is especially important regarding young people because they may be very impressionable as they begin to form their views of the world.

Interestingly, although the advertising content analyzed in these studies did not focus on food advertising per se (but contained many commercials for food by default because the product category is so heavily marketed toward younger populations), one study specifically investigated gender portrayals in food advertising aimed at children. Authors Nancy M. Childs and Jill K. Maher reported that, when compared to nonfood advertising aimed at children, there was greater male domination in the areas of voice-overs (announcers), product users, and main character roles in food advertising on children's TV programming in the United States. The authors suggested that this finding was particularly curious because food is inherently a gender-neutral product. Therefore, they stated, to favor a male perspective in advertising for such a product likely reflects a larger cultural bias on the part of most advertisers rather than conscious decision making specific to the marketing of particular products.

Furnham, Abramsky, and Gunter also investigated ethnic factors in their study of children's TV ads, many of which were related to snack food, fast food, and breakfast cereal. As might be expected, the vast majority of the ads in both the United States and Great Britain featured white actors (both male and female). Black actors appeared in a distant second number of ads, but this number far exceeded the number of ads containing Asians or Hispanics. For all ethnic categories in both countries, more males than females appeared in the ads, except that no ads featured Hispanic males in the Great Britain sample, whereas three featured Hispanic females.

Although most food advertising may contain primarily white actors, food companies—especially those who make packaged food and fast-food items—clearly understand the increasing value of younger, more ethnically diverse audiences and therefore are pursuing heightened marketing efforts to reach them. In the United States, most of these types of campaigns emphasize niche-specific media strategies, such as cable TV advertising, although some companies are hoping that the "newer" programming available on prime-time network TV can reach a wider segment of the young or ethnic markets. Regardless of media strategy, most successful campaigns by food marketers try to tap the younger and ethnic audiences by supporting traditional advertising placements with targeted communication or promotional efforts that effectively appeal to these audiences in nontraditional ways. Common ethnically based strategies currently include incorporating the food companies' brands in various music/CD promotions and concert tours, sports marketing efforts, family entertainment packages, after-school and back-to-school programs, video game promotions, and community-centered campaigns executed in specific ethnic areas.

—Frank E. Dardis

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Gender and; Advertising on Children's Programs; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Ethnicity/Race, Stereotyping; Food Advertising, Content in; Food Advertising to Children; Gender Roles on Television

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FOOD ADVERTISING, INFLUENCE OF

The influence of food advertising on children is an immensely complex issue of interest to policymakers, health professionals, and politicians. Given the growing evidence that obesity is a pandemic of growing proportions documented by the World Health Organization, this is not surprising. However, there is often a tendency to simplify, and the rhetoric about negative effects of food advertising to children sometimes goes beyond the facts. Evidence that food advertising to children has an influence on their preferences and choices of different brands is available, but it should be approached with caution given the methodological limitations of the research. Because food preference and choice is but one parameter in the multifactorial problem of obesity in children, there is limited evidence that promotional activity makes a significant contribution to the problem of obesity.

Surveys on the incidence of television food advertising to children have been done regularly since the 1978 analysis by Barcus and McLaughlin. In 1999, Gamble and Cotugna published a review of research over the past quarter-century. The picture that emerges is dominated by foods such as highly sugared breakfast cereals, convenience foods, and food services such as McDonald's and Burger King, with negligible advertising of fresh fruit and vegetables. It is generally agreed that, taken together, these foods would not constitute a healthy diet. However, two issues need to be addressed. Because children are fledgling consumers with allowances that are not spent on supermarket items such as breakfast cereals, children don't directly purchase most of the foods advertised. The market for foods advertised to children is a family market in which children do exert an influence on purchase and consumption patterns. Although household purchase patterns are influenced by children's preferences and their negotiating skills within the family (so-called pester power), this influence is mediated by family styles of communication, negotiation, and socialization. The second issue is that there is no simple mapping between patterns of dietary preference and choice in children and foods advertised in the market for children and young people. Dietary habits are already well established by culture, peers, and family during the period of primary socialization. The range of foods that are advertised is driven largely by the economics of advertising, which is concerned with buying media time for a brand or portfolio of brands. In a lucrative market (such as foods for kids), many brands in, for example, the snacks or sugared drinks sectors are advertised just because there are many companies competing for market share. Ads for fruit and vegetables are few because there is little branding in this sector.

How is the influence of food advertising on children ascertained? Advertising is not limited to broadcast advertising on TV, magazines, or billboards, as there are point-of-sale displays, vending machines in schools, and other techniques to consider. However, most of the research has been done on television advertising to children. In the 1970s and 1980s, the constant barrage of food advertising on Saturday mornings and after school was a great cause for concern—the phrase *kid-vid ghetto* was used to aptly describe the situation at that time. It is extremely difficult, however, to design research that simulates the effect on dietary habits of different levels of cumulative exposure to food advertising, not least because current models of media effects incorporate a child who actively processes information (see Valkenburg, 2004), and it would be difficult to control the various strategies used by different groups of children to view and understand advertising in context.

Researchers have looked at food choice as a function of exposure to advertising in an experimental setting. Typically, these experiments involved children who watched TV ads and then were asked what they would like to choose from a range of alternative brands or products, including the one previously advertised. Research by Goldberg, Gorn, and Gibson (1978) showed that children are more likely to select highly sugared foods if they have previously viewed TV commercials for them, and they are more likely to choose nutritious snack and breakfast foods if they

have just seen pronutrition public service announcements. A subsequent study by Gorn and Goldberg (1980) showed that exposure to more than one commercial for that brand increased the probability that the brand would be chosen, although there was no effect on actual consumption behavior. However, the studies by Goldberg and others, although well designed and ingenious, do not really simulate the realities of consumer behavior within the family for different foods, although they do confirm that advertising influences children's preferences and choices at the level of the brand in the short term.

The evidence that advertising is effective in increasing consumption of whole categories of foods (a generic effect) is more limited. For example, Bolton (1983) used self-report measures on a large sample of children and found that children's exposure to television food advertising significantly increased the number of their snacks and that such viewing had a subsequent and independent effect on the child's dietary efficiency and caloric intake. The effect was small, however, and Bolton concludes that effects of this small size were unlikely to have a serious effect on children's health and nutrition. A 2003 comprehensive review by Hastings and colleagues found modest support for the view that food advertising affects children's consumption behavior.

—Brian M. Young

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising on Children's Programs; Food Advertising, Obesity and; Food Advertising to Children; Media Effects, Models of; Obesity

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FOOD ADVERTISING, INTERNATIONAL

Obesity is now considered one of the primary health problems facing children in industrialized countries, and cross-cultural studies have demonstrated that food advertisements are associated with changing eating habits around the globe. A significant amount of research in varying countries has been collected within the past decade that begins to demonstrate the worldwide impact of food advertising. The prevalence of food advertisements is not without consequences. Over the past few decades, obesity rates have increased two- to threefold in most developed countries. It is widely agreed that increases in the prevalence of obesity are related in part to the media environment, although some researchers still believe that a causal link has not yet been demonstrated.

Medical research does demonstrate that 60% of overweight children have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease and diabetes; unhealthy eating habits and lack of physical activity are risk factors to which television viewing may contribute. According to the most recent estimates from the American Academy of Pediatrics, children view an average of almost 3 hours of television each day in industrialized countries around the world. As television is the most widely used advertising medium, it is important to examine children's exposure to food messages and the content of these advertisements.

An international study of 9-year-olds in Ireland, Australia, Norway, and the United States showed that TV ads played a significant role in stimulating the interests of children and were successfully able to capture their attention with the techniques used, such as cartoon characters, catchy music, bright colors, and child actors, techniques that are often employed to sell food products.

According to a Japanese study conducted during the 1990s, food preferences and consumption patterns are being influenced in many nations around the world, including the United States, Australia, England, and Japan, partly due to media consumption. This influence correlates with a rise in the intake of unhealthy, processed food products that are frequently advertised on TV. For example, an Australian Food Commission study (1997) reported that 9- and 10-year-old Australian children believed that Ronald McDonald knew what was best for children to eat. Moreover, a recent British study (1999) found that more half of the 828 ads analyzed in the research were for food products, 60% of which were for breakfast foods and other sugary snacks with little nutritional value.

Other developed countries around the world have actively responded to this growing concern. The European Union has recently called obesity a "European-wide problem of epidemic proportions," and the European Commission has committed to making obesity a high priority over the next 5 years, specifically targeting junk food ads with increased regulations and potential bans. In fact, Sweden has already placed a ban on any advertising targeted to children younger than 12 years of age. This is an area in which the United States lags behind, as food advertising to children is a highly profitable segment of the marketing world. Such ads are unlikely to disappear from American television without a significant fight from those companies that benefit from it.

Food advertising has clearly penetrated television programming worldwide. To amend the crisis of child obesity worldwide, improvements are needed in the areas of exercise and eating behaviors. Research evidence demonstrates that media affect eating behaviors and preferences as well as level of physical activity. According to numerous scholars, television has been cited as a factor contributing to higher caloric intake among children. Two possible factors have been proposed that link television viewing to increased obesity rates in this body of research. The first factor is the reduced calorie expenditure from excessive television viewing in place of exercising and engaging in physical activities. The second factor is the increased calorie consumption resulting from the increased desire and requests for food products that are advertised to children on television.

Increases in the amount of time watching television and advertisements have been associated with the higher intake of fattening, sweet, and salty snacks and carbonated beverages, as well as the lower intake of fruit and healthy beverages. The majority of studies in this area show that television food advertisements on children's programming are for highly sweetened products, and the proportion of advertisements from fast-food restaurants is increasing. The bulk of correlational and experimental studies demonstrate relationships among the amount of time spent viewing television, food requests by children directed at parents, food preferences, and the purchase and consumption of foods advertised on television. In addition, several large studies have demonstrated associations between the number of hours of television watched and the prevalence of obesity in children from various countries. With the increasing rates of obesity associated with television advertising, action is critical, and changes in the media environment are needed. The existing body of research in this area clearly shows that this is an international issue.

—Andrea M. Bergstrom

See also Food Advertising, Content in; Food Advertising, Influence of; Food Advertising, Obesity and; Obesity

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FOOD ADVERTISING, OBESITY AND

The growing rates of obesity among American children and adolescents have reached epidemic proportions; over the past 40 years, the percentage of children and adolescents who are overweight or obese has nearly tripled. The rates are even higher for children and teens of color, especially among African American and Latina/o youth. These alarming statistics have been met with grave concern by the medical and public health communities, and although the causes are complex and involve both biological and environmental factors, a number of key cultural factors have been identified as potential contributors. These factors include the growth of fast-food restaurants and "super-sized" portions; the increasing variety of foods available that are heavily processed and of low nutritional value; the increasing reliance on automobile travel and corresponding decrease in walking and bicycle riding for transportation; the decrease in school time devoted to recess, sports, and physical education; increased marketing of highly sugared and high fat food products directly to children and youth in venues such as school; and increased time spent using commercial media.

Concerns about the effects of media have largely focused on screen time, including television, videos and DVDs, computers, video games, and movies in the theater. These outcomes can be generally classified as resulting from either *direct effects* (due to the content being viewed) or *indirect effects* (due to the act of watching, regardless of the content). The latter category is primarily the result of displacement effects (i.e., effects of not participating in other activities the children could or would have been doing if they were not watching television), but indirect effects could also be due to other behaviors that typically accompany this type of media use (such as eating junk food).

SCREEN TIME

The most recent studies of media use by children and adolescents conclude that the average 8-to-18-year-old spends 6½ hours a day with media, and that about a third of that time is spent "media multitasking" (e.g., reading and listening to music at the same time). Most of that time involves screen media; listening to recorded music accounts for only about 1¾ hours a day, with less than 45 minutes spent, on average, reading books, magazines, or newspapers. Television remains the dominant medium for children and youth, accounting for an average of almost 4 hours a day (including time spent watching videos and DVDs), with steady TV viewing habits developed by age 2 or 3. Although there has been a slight decrease in children's TV viewing over the past several years, their overall screen time has gone up slightly due to increases in time spent on computers and playing video games. In comparison to screen time, the average 8-to-18-year-old spends less than 1½ hours a day involved in physical activity (including sports or exercise).

FOOD ADVERTISING AND SCREEN TIME

Recent studies have shown a huge increase in the marketing of new food products targeted directly to children and youth, with nearly 10 times more new products introduced in 2004 than only 10 years earlier. The average child sees roughly 40,000 TV commercials a year, and about two thirds of those commercials are for foods, beverages, or restaurants. Numerous studies have shown that the vast majority of the foods advertised to children on television are high in sugar, fat, or sodium. Cereal commercials make up about 30% of all TV commercials shown during children's programs and frequently contain ingredients such as marshmallows, frosting or honey coating, chocolate flavoring, or other forms of added sugar. Candy, ice cream treats, and highly sugared beverages (such as Kool-Aid, soda pop, and "fruit" drinks) make up 15% to 20% of the commercials, and fast-food restaurants that tout kids' meals high in fat and sodium account for another 10% to 15%.

Far fewer studies have been done of food advertising messages on other types of screen media (e.g., video games, movies, and Internet sites) or food product placements in TV programs or movies aimed at children, but those messages are likely to increase in the future. A growing number of food advertisers have also developed websites for children that feature games based on their food products and their associated characters (such as Frosted Flakes' Tony the Tiger); and websites such as neopets.com and candystore.com that are extremely popular with children prominently feature snack foods and highly sugared beverages as part of the scenery or elements of games.

INDIRECT EFFECTS OF SCREEN TIME

Most studies have shown a positive correlation between screen time (especially TV viewing) and obesity among children and adolescents, although

some studies have found only a weak relationship or no relationship at all. The methodologies used in these studies have varied; most longitudinal studies (following children over time, documenting both hours spent using media and measures of weight and physical health) have found a relationship between media use and obesity that increases with age, and some have concluded that screen time was a significant predictor of overweight even when controlled for other factors like social class.

A common assumption about the causal mechanism involved in this relationship relates to the displacement effect: Spending time with screen media displaces physical activity. However, there is a surprisingly weak negative correlation between screen time and time spent on physical exercise; children and adolescents who spend less time with screen media may instead be engaged in other physically passive activities, such as reading, doing arts and crafts, playing board games, or talking with friends.

The indirect effects of screen time, however, also include eating foods that are poor in nutritional quality (especially snack foods and soda pop) while watching screen media. Several studies have shown this to be the case, primarily for television and movies in theaters; concurrent snacking is less likely to occur when children or youth are playing video games or using computers (in large part because their hands are busy).

DIRECT EFFECTS OF FOOD ADVERTISING

Nearly all the research on the effects of food advertising on children and adolescents has focused on television. Numerous studies have shown that TV commercials for foods, beverages, and restaurants do influence children (ages 2 to 12) to prefer high-calorie and low-nutrient foods and drinks (especially those that are high in sugar and fat). They also influence children's requests for and actual purchases of those products, an effect that increases with the age of the child. A growing body of research also shows that these commercials influence children's beliefs about foods and beverages, including beliefs about nutritional claims and healthy diets. Evidence regarding the influence of TV marketing on food and beverage preferences, purchase requests, and beliefs of teens (ages 12 to 18) is less clear and may reflect the broader exposure of teens to different forms of media besides television, although little research has been done on the influence of nutritional messages from other media sources.

Studies have also shown that marketing techniques such as cross-promotion (e.g., using popular TV and movie characters to promote foods and beverages) increase the influence of advertisements on children. These types of celebrity endorsements have great emotional appeal, which transfers to the food or beverage products being advertised, and they also increase children's memory for the advertisement and the product.

A recent summary of peer-reviewed research studies concluded that there is strong evidence that TV advertising negatively influences short-term eating habits of children ages 2 to 11, increasing the likelihood that they will select and eat foods and beverages that are high in sugar and fat or are otherwise of poor nutritional quality. The same report concluded that there is strong evidence that exposure to TV advertising is positively correlated with adiposity (fatness) for both children and teens.

INTERVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

If screen time causes increased obesity, then it would make sense that interventions designed to decrease children's media time would lead to decreases in weight (or at least slow the rate of weight gain). Several experimental interventions have shown that to be the case, but intervention has been most effective when coupled with an emphasis on increased exercise and improved eating habits. Other recent interventions have incorporated media literacy education to build children's critical thinking skills about the nutritional messages conveyed in food advertising aimed directly at them.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends no television viewing at all for children under the age of 2 years and limited television viewing for children between the ages of 2 and 10. Other recommendations for parents related to screen time and obesity include not allowing children to eat while watching television and encouraging physical activity during screen time or as an alternative to it.

A number of organizations have recently called for changes in food advertising aimed at children, including the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Science. Some of the recommendations involve expanding the industry

self-regulatory guidelines beyond TV advertising to include food advertisements on the Internet and other new media forms, and to eliminate the use of celebrity endorsements and licensed characters to promote foods and beverages that are healthy for children and youth. Other recommendations include integrating healthy food and beverage choices into the storylines of popular TV shows and movies aimed at children and teens, as Sesame Workshop recently began to do with Cookie Monster talking about cookies as "a sometimes food." A recent IOM report also called upon the food, beverage, and restaurant industries to use their effective marketing techniques to promote and support more healthy diet choices for children and teens.

—Cyndy Scheibe

See also Advertising, Body Image and; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Advertising on Children's Programs; Body Image in Children; Eating Habits, Media Influence on; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Food Advertising, Content in; Food Advertising, Influence of; Obesity

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FOOD ADVERTISING, REGULATION OF

Much controversy has surrounded the idea of limiting or restricting advertisers' power to advertise food products to children in recent decades, beginning with advocacy groups such as Action for Children's Television (ACT) petitioning the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) during the 1970s to eliminate ads for sugared food products during children's programming. Although the Children's Television Act of 1990 placed limitations on the amount of time for which advertisements can be aired during children's programming, reducing ad time to 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays, there are no regulations in place restricting the content of advertisements for food or any other products directed at children. The task of monitoring the advertising content directed at children has fallen to a variety of advocacy groups, including the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) as well as the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI).

CONTENT AND EFFECTS OF FOOD ADVERTISING

Although federal restrictions are not currently in place in regard to the content of food advertisements, research evidence indicates that the content of advertisements may in fact influence children and adolescents in a negative manner. According to recent research, more than 60% of the adult population in the United States is overweight, with nearly 30% classified as obese (having a body mass index of 30 or more), and one in three American children is obese. Food advertising is likely to be one of the culprits, as studies show that children desire the food products they see on television, and the large majority of food advertisements are for sugary or salty snacks, candy, and breakfast cereals. The heavy marketing of high-fat foods and foods with low nutritional value to children is often viewed by scholars and researchers as exploitation, as evidence demonstrates that young children do not understand that commercials are designed to sell products and do not yet have the cognitive abilities necessary to comprehend or evaluate advertising messages.

For instance, an analysis conducted by Kotz and Story of 52 hours of advertising aired during Saturday-morning cartoons revealed that two thirds of the advertisements were for fats, oils, sweets, and

high-sugar cereal. None of the ads within the programming were for fruits or vegetables. The majority of the remaining advertisements were for toys. This high level of exposure to unhealthy food ads, combined with children's inability to comprehend the critical differences between advertising and programming content, has created a very desirable target population for advertisers and marketers in recent years.

THE CHILDREN'S ADVERTISING REVIEW UNIT (CARU)

CARU, established in 1974, is responsible for reviewing advertisements appearing in all media outlets directed at children younger than 12 years of age. CARU seeks voluntary cooperation from all corporations and groups advertising to children to avoid advertising that could be interpreted as misleading, inaccurate, or inconsistent with CARU's guidelines. These guidelines are of particular importance for companies that target food advertisements to children, as research has shown that children are likely to trust the information provided by the advertisements, and children will also be more likely to desire food products seen in advertisements. CARU has received criticism for not enforcing strict enough restrictions for the industry and for not trying to impose regulations on advertising by the food industry. CARU supporters pay a fee to belong to the organization, and some of its members include companies that advertise food products to children, such as General Mills, the Kellogg Company, Frito-Lay, Inc., Kraft Foods, and Nabisco.

THE CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST (CSPI)

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is a grassroots organization concerned with health issues such as food nutrition and safety standards; it is also concerned with the advertisement of food products. It has gained public attention through promoting awareness of the nutritional value of popular food items, such as movie popcorn and items at family restaurants. The CSPI is in favor of policy changes and has been able to successfully effect changes in the laws pertaining to the labeling of food products.

FEDERAL REGULATION

Aside from the self-regulation of child-directed advertising imposed by CARU and the actions of other advocacy groups, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) share authority over the regulation of food products in the United States. Specifically, Section 5 of the 1994 FTC Act clearly prohibits false advertising that could be seen as misleading about content in regard to food products. Additionally, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Act forbids the use of any product labeling that is false or misleading. The FTC has official procedures for investigating improper actions, beginning with identifying the misrepresentation occurring within an advertisement, identifying the omission of information for deceptive purposes, considering the advertisement from the point of view of the consumer, and—depending on the observations—in some cases requiring the offender whose advertisement is under investigation to provide additional nutrient information or health claims about the product. If the FTC is convinced that violation of the regulations has in fact occurred, the commission can bring charges against the violator. If convicted, punishment can be a fine of up to $5,000 or up to 6 months imprisonment; harsher penalties can be applied to repeat offenders, with fines up to $10,000 and up to a year of incarceration.

THE FUTURE OF FOOD ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN

With much recent attention in the news media to America's rising childhood obesity rates, and research evidence supporting child-directed food advertising as an evident contributor to what has been referred to an epidemic, it is likely that the possibility of food advertising regulations and restrictions will be revisited in the near future, as the FTC is again holding hearings on this issue. As food advertising to children is a highly profitable segment of the marketing world, it is unlikely to disappear from television without a fight from those who benefit from it. Although CARU and other organizations exist to monitor child-directed advertising, political interests make legislation and enforcement difficult and complicated. But, with the increasing rates of obesity undoubtedly linked to television advertising, action is critical, and changes in the media environment are needed.

—Andrea M. Bergstrom

See also Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Food Advertising, Content in; Food Advertising, Influence of; Food Advertising, Obesity and; Obesity

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FOOD ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN

Food advertisements aimed specifically at children have been of concern to parents and educators since the early years of television. Food advertising comes to children through a wide range of media sources, including TV commercials, food packaging, billboards and point-of-purchase advertising, magazine advertisements, and product placements in TV programs, movies, and video games. Most recently, there has been an explosion of product tie-ins, cross-marketing approaches, and Internet websites designed for children and teens and tied to specific food products or companies (such as Kellogg's "Fun-K-Town"), with games and free prizes. Of particular concern are the free "educational" materials (including reading and counting books for young children) that are sent to schools and day-care centers and prominently feature food products that appeal to children.

Despite this wide range of sources for food advertising messages, TV commercials shown during children's shows and other television programs are still the most direct and most frequent source of food advertising to children—and the only source that has been studied to any extent using empirical research methods. Food and restaurant advertising accounts for more than half of all TV commercials shown during children's programs, and food products are among those most frequently advertised during other late-afternoon, prime-time, and weekend programming as well. And although there is some evidence of a slight decline in the average number of food and restaurant commercials seen by children in recent years, even those studies estimate that the average child sees about 5,000 such commercials a year.

Three aspects of food advertising constitute the primary cause of concern: (1) the types of foods that are shown (and not shown) in advertisements aimed at children; (2) misleading nutritional messages in food advertising aimed at children; and (3) deceptive and distracting techniques used in food advertising for children that mask the true purpose of the message (i.e., to get children to like, request, and buy the food being marketed to them). The harmful effects of food advertising on children's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, especially related to the growing obesity epidemic among American children, has been traced—at least in part—to the marketing of high-fat and high-sugar products directly to them.

FOODS ADVERTISED TO CHILDREN

Numerous studies have shown that the foods most frequently marketed to children are high in fat and sugar and low in nutrients; this has hardly changed at all since the 1960s. One recent study found that 83% of the foods advertised on the most popular children's TV programs were for convenience foods, fast foods, and sweets, and that snack time was shown more frequently than breakfast, lunch, and dinner combined. Cereals, which make up about 30% of all TV commercials shown during children's programs, are usually high in sugar (18g or more per serving) and often contain ingredients such as marshmallows, frosting or honey coating, chocolate flavoring, or other forms of added sugar. Even added fruits, such as raisins, may be dipped in sugar to make them extra sweet. Candy, ice cream treats, and highly sugared beverages (such as Kool-Aid, soda pop, and "fruit" drinks) make up another 15% to 20% of the commercials on children's television. High-fat foods, including "kids' meals" at fast-food restaurants, account for another 10% to 15% of the commercials; research has shown that a diet based on foods advertised to children would greatly exceed the recommended daily values for both saturated fat and sodium.

Even the products that fall into other food groups, such as fruit, vegetables, protein, and dairy foods, often contain added sugar or fat. Yogurt for children is usually brightly colored, heavily sugared, and may have

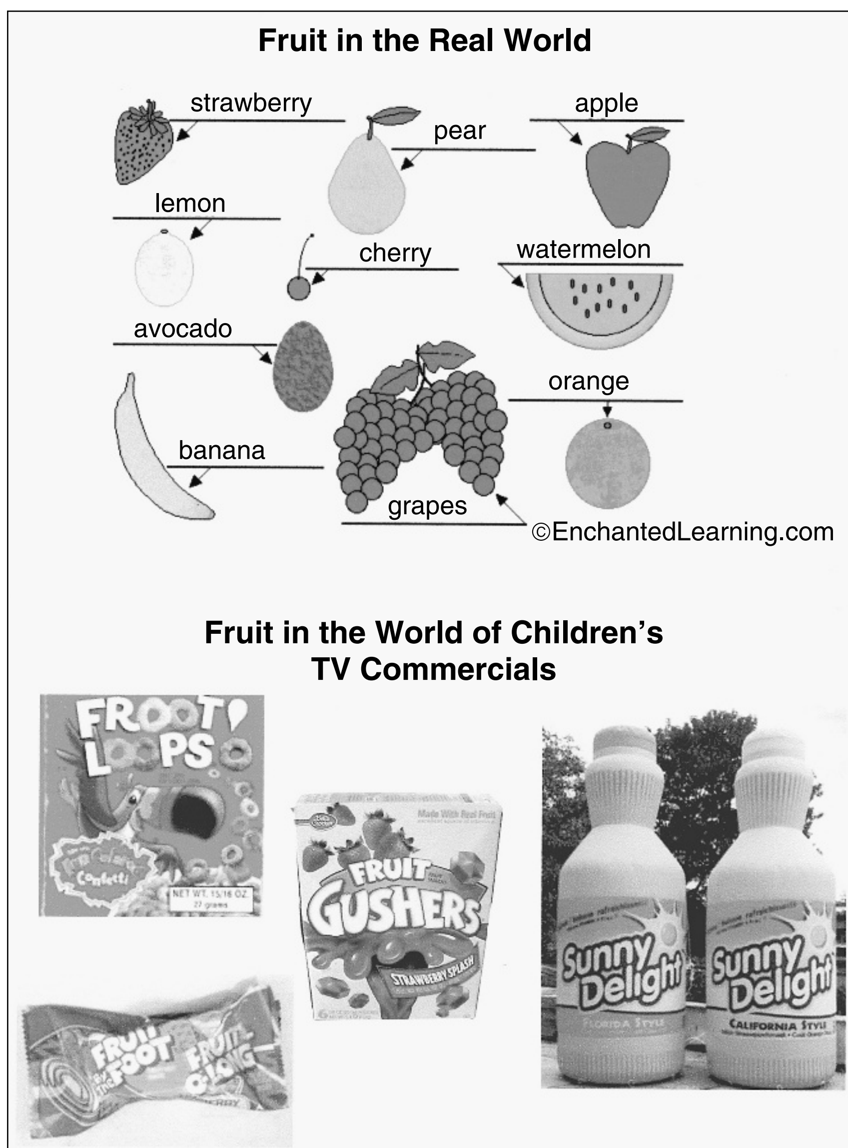

Figure 1 When children are encouraged to eat fruit, adults are thinking of the examples on the top. When children watch television, however, the examples on the bottom are what they are most likely to see; these products contact little or no fruit, despite their names and appearance.

SOURCE: (to come)

added "sprinkles"; "fruit" snacks and drinks are made almost entirely from sugar and water; protein is likely to come in the form of hot dogs or peanut butter with added sugar; and the most common "vegetables" marketed to children are pickles and ketchup. Whole, unprocessed foods (actual fruits, vegetables, or whole grains) are rarely advertised at all and—with the exception of milk—are almost never advertised to children.

MISLEADING NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Most food advertising aimed at children contains little or no direct nutritional information about the product. Such advertising often implies, however, that foods are healthier or more nutritious than they actually are. This occurs most frequently with respect to "fruit": commercials that imply, through visual representations, voice-overs, or product names, that the food contains a lot of fruit when it does not (see Fig. 1). Commercials have shown fruit falling out of the sky, fruit bursting out of the food, or the head of a child eating the food turning into a giant piece of fruit—all for products that contain little or no fruit at all. Studies have shown that children do believe that foods such as Froot Loops and Fruit Roll-Ups are fruit. Having been told that they need to eat lots of fruits and vegetables each day, children believe that these products are healthy for them. Most of the "fruit" foods and beverages advertised to children, in fact, contain large amounts of sugar.

Other misleading nutritional messages in children's food commercials include the implication that candy, sugared cereals, and highly sugared beverages are good for you because they give you energy (e.g., sports drinks such as Gatorade). Sometimes, commercials show mothers serving the food or beverage to children with the overt or implied message that the product is "healthy" because mothers feel good that their children are eating or drinking it (e.g., Sunny D, which contains only 5% juice). Food advertisements may also include nutritional statements that are factually true but leave out key information (e.g., referring to candy as a "low-fat food").

Another practice that is misleading involves what is known as the "complete breakfast shot." Current

guidelines issued by the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) concerning advertising to children state:

> Representation of food products should be made so as to encourage sound use of the product with a view toward healthy development of the child and development of good nutritional practices; advertisements representing mealtime should clearly and adequately depict the role of the product within the framework of a balanced diet.

Cereal commercials aimed at children do comply with the latter part of this statement by showing a brief shot of the bowl of cereal, a glass of milk, whole fruit or juice, and some form of grain, along with a verbal statement that the cereal is part of a "complete" or "balanced" or "nutritious" breakfast. However, studies have shown that young children typically interpret this as meaning that the cereal alone is sufficient for a complete breakfast. Furthermore, many commercials incorporate language into the voice-over that is distracting or even contradictory, with a message about nutritious eating (" . . . a marshmallowy sweet part of this good breakfast," "a colorful part of this fun breakfast," or "Pop Tarts, a fun part of this TV breakfast").

DISTRACTING AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES

Like most television food advertising, food commercials shown during children's programs contain many elements that distract children from attending to the selling intent of the message, including cartoon or humorous spokescharacters (such as Tony the Tiger and Ronald McDonald), story lines emphasizing happiness and fun, super-saturated colors, and special visual or auditory effects. Child-oriented websites tied to food products take this a step further, basing interactive games, puzzles, and sweepstakes around the foods in such a way that masks the central purpose of the activity (i.e., to increase children's positive attitudes toward the product so they will request or purchase it more often).

Of even greater concern to educators is the marketing of "free" educational materials (including books, educational videos, and ancillary teaching aides) that incorporate images of foods of low nutritional quality that are heavily advertised to children. For example, one set of early counting books for children is based on using M&Ms and similar candies to practice counting. Schools—especially those in poor urban districts—are increasingly willing to post advertising for food products in classrooms, in school buses, and on school computers in exchange for much-needed educational funding from those companies. Although there is as yet no empirical evidence documenting the influence of this type of advertising for children, a recent American Psychological Association task force on advertising and children argued that messages presented in a credible educational context may lead children to see these products as more desirable and less harmful than they would if shown standard advertising presentations.

—Cyndy L. Scheibe

See also Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Advertising on Children's Programs; Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Eating Habits, Media Influence on; Food Advertising, Content in; Food Advertising, Influence of; Food Advertising, Obesity and; Food Advertising, Regulation of; Product Placements, Food

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FOOD AND BEVERAGE ADVERTISING IN SCHOOLS

Food and beverage advertising enters schools by a variety of routes, including product sales, direct advertising, indirect advertising, and market research. Each of these routes has variations, and each category is outlined within this discussion. This vast assortment of school-based technologies and techniques brings food and beverage products to students quite prominently within school settings.

PRODUCT SALES

Exclusionary Contracts

"Cola contracts" with major soft drink corporations (primarily Coke and Pepsi) are major entries in this category. A school district, district consortium, or individual school may sign an exclusionary, multiyear contract with the corporation (generally finalized through one of their major bottlers). An initial payment is received at contract signing, and sales quotas are set for each of the years within the contract. By the terms of the contract, the district, consortium, or individual school is expected to meet these sales quotas to receive further contract revenues.

Contract agreements have now been signed in hundreds of school districts, from Colorado Springs to Madison, Wisconsin, to Edison, New Jersey. The Colorado Springs School District, for example, signed a 10-year, $8-million-to-$11-million contract with Coca-Cola. Although contracts have been signed west of the Mississippi River, the trend is moving eastward, and the pace is quickening as schools look to this avenue to cover severe budget shortfalls. By 2006, 240 school districts in 31 states had entered exclusive "pouring rights" agreements with cola companies. This figure was triple the number of contract agreements in 2005.

Lunchroom Contracts

These contract agreements are made with popular fast-food companies (e.g., McDonald's and Taco Bell). Under these contracts, the company serves in the lunchroom alongside the regular cafeteria fare. The products sold in both cola vending and lunchroom contracts match those one would expect to find in either of these venues in the general public.

Fund-Raising Activities

Fund-raising activities constitute a third product sales avenue within schools. The school or one of its internal entities may contract with a major candy company to sell their product(s) as their fund-raising initiative. The company contractually agrees to donate to the school or entity a relatively modest percentage of the sales revenue. Hundreds—in some instances, thousands—of children then fan out across their communities, selling to residents, parents, relatives, friends, and (undoubtedly) themselves, as they try to meet or exceed goals for the fund-raising campaign effort. Hershey, Nestle, and other major candy companies are the most frequent contract participants in such fund-raising efforts.

DIRECT ADVERTISING

Several direct advertising approaches target and reach children and teens at school. Four of the most prevalent are advertising on school grounds and school equipment, ad space sales in school publications, media-based advertising, and product samples.

School Grounds and School Equipment Advertising

The vast array of grounds and equipment ad venues include billboards, marquees, message boards, posters, assignment books, school buses, school bus kiosks, company-donated book covers, and athletic stadium scoreboards. Some schools even place ads atop their schools or atop their school buses.

School Publications

Sales of advertising space in school newspapers, yearbooks, and sports programs are the most prominent food and beverage ad venues among publications.

Media-Based Advertising

Although each of the preceding categories could be called media in the broadest sense, this category refers to television and radio advertising brought directly into the school or its classrooms. Both major

entries in this category target middle and high school students.

Channel One

Channel One enters individual school or district contractual agreements whereby the school or district agrees to broadcast their 10-minute news program and its 2 minutes of commercials in 80% of the classrooms on 90% of the days. The school receives a Channel One-installed satellite dish, two central VCR/DVRs, internal wiring, and a 19-inch television set for each classroom. Food and beverage ads are quite prominent among those carried on Channel One. Some of the most frequently shown product ads include those for candy, snack foods, gum, chips, sports drinks, and colas.

Currently, Channel One is in 12,000 schools nationwide and reaches 8.1 million students on a daily basis. It is more widely watched than any major network and charges upwards of $800,000 for a single 30-second commercial. Roughly 38% of all middle and high schools in the United States are connected to its system, and another 1,000 schools are expected to be added over the next several years.

Star Broadcasting

Following a contractual pattern similar to Channel One's, Star Broadcasting pipes top 50 "hot rock" or "hot country" into schools' hallways, lobbies, and lunchrooms. Advertising matches the ads one would generally find within any top 50 commercial radio log. Again, candy, snack food, and colas are prominent. Star Broadcasting considers its prevalence data to be proprietary, but it specializes in contracting schools and military installations in the United States as well as military installations around the world.

Mouse Pads and Newspapers

Word of Mouse contracts with school systems to supply all the mouse pads for their computers. The supplied pads carry ads, and Internet marketers purchase semester-long visibility at 20,000 to 400,000 school computer terminals. Newspapers-for-schools programs bring a wide range of food and beverage ads to children and adolescents in the schools. As with television and radio, food and beverage ads are quite prevalent in these media entries.

Corporate Samples

Candy and chips samples are among the most prominent food and beverage products given out to students at school. Again, companies such as Hershey and Nestle are among the most prominent sample providers.

INDIRECT ADVERTISING

Corporate-Sponsored Educational Materials (SEMs)

Several companies provide curriculum units to schools. Food and beverage corporations are prominent among them, and their units generally address either the making of one of their products (e.g., one of Hershey's) or the corporation's good-citizen image (e.g., caring for the environment). The key goal is to create brand awareness and a positive attitude toward the product and the corporation.

Corporate-Sponsored Contests and Incentives

One of the most common and familiar approaches is to sponsor a contest, such as book reading, and to provide free product coupons to those children or teens who attain the established goal. Some of the most prominent food corporations using this technique are national pizza companies.

Textbook Branding

With this approach, references to products are placed in textbook content. For example, a student may have a mathematics textbook that contains problems using food products. Questions such as "How many M&Ms . . . ?" are frequent and familiar.

Market Research

This in-school technique relates to polls and surveys, Internet panels, and Internet tracking.

Polls and Surveys

These may be conducted either in paper-and-pencil format or by computer. The range of usage can be broad, including on-site cola taste tests or food product taste tests. Student preferences and family demographics also are surveyed.

Internet Panels

A currently growing corporate advertising technique is to select an online panel of student leaders—students who are very influential among their peers—and give them incentives to share word of a given product among their peers. This technique is related to what is termed *stealth marketing* or *buzz/viral marketing.* Premised on the *ripple effect* or the *spreading viral effect,* stealth marketing presents a product or service in a clandestine way, "beneath the radar" of the consumer. The consumer is influenced by what appears to be a genuine source of information without strings or influence attached. Trendsetters within the marketed group are targeted. They, in turn, spread the word face to face and through Internet chat rooms, weblogs, and their new cousins, vlogs (video) and moblogs (mobile, cellphone). Other types of stealth marketing include brand pushing (folks planted in a store who "happen" to converse loudly about a given product), celebrity (where the celebrity in a bona fide media interview "happens" to endorse the given product or service), and product placement in video games and pop and rap music marketing (where a product is placed in the video game or named in the lyrics of the music). Each of these techniques involves the stealth principle.

Internet Tracking

This method collects data on student hits on given websites and gathers a wide array of information on the individual student, thereby tailoring a product message to that student that will resonate with what the student has expressed.

—Edward L. Palmer

See also Commercial Television and Radio in Schools; Commercial Television in Schools: Channel One; Schools, Advertising/Marketing in

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FORBIDDEN FRUIT HYPOTHESIS

> Adam was but human—this explains it all. He did not want the apple for the apple's sake, he wanted it only because it was forbidden.
>
> —Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Ch. 2

The term *forbidden fruit* comes from the biblical account in which God tells Adam and Eve to help themselves to any fruit in the Garden of Eden except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit anyway (or perhaps because God told them not to). If something is forbidden, people may want it even more. For example, they may conclude, "Anything I shouldn't have is probably really fun to have." According to the forbidden fruit hypothesis, forbidding something only makes it more desirable and attractive. As applied to media, the forbidden fruit hypothesis suggests that warning labels and restrictions on media access to materials will make them more attractive.

The forbidden fruit hypothesis has much in common with the folk notion of "reverse psychology." According to reverse psychology, the best way to get someone to do something is to tell them to do exactly the opposite. Many parents can testify that this approach has worked with their children. Social psychologist Jack Brehm proposed a more formal theory based on these ideas, called *reactance theory*. The central point of reactance theory is that people desire to have freedom of choice and therefore have a negative reaction to having some of their choices or options taken away by other people or by external forces. The term *reactance* is specifically used to refer to the negative feelings people have in response to loss of freedom (or threats of loss). When people lose a desired option, they respond by increasing their desire for that option, by trying to do what is now forbidden, or by aggressing against the person who deprived them of the option.

Media containing violence, sex, and profanity often contain warning labels (e.g., "Due to some violent content, parental discretion is advised") and restrictive ratings (e.g., "TV-MA: [Mature Audiences Only]"). According to the forbidden fruit hypothesis, warning labels and restrictive ratings will increase rather than decrease the attractiveness of media containing objectionable content.

Reactance effects tend to be bigger when an authority figure tells us not to do something, perhaps because messages from authoritative sources produce more pressure to comply. Research has shown that warning labels are especially likely to backfire if they are issued by an authoritative source. For example, in a 1996 study by Bushman and Stack, a film warning about violent content from the U.S. surgeon general almost doubled the number of people who chose to watch the film.

A meta-analysis by Bushman and Cantor of research on media ratings in general showed that a variety of types of ratings make programming more attractive rather than turning viewers away. This analysis explored the effects of restrictive ratings and descriptive ratings (those that specify the presence of controversial content, such as violence and sex, without explicitly recommending restricted access). Overall, both types of ratings and advisories increased attraction to programs. In addition, the effects were stronger for male participants than for female ones. There was also a curvilinear relationship between the impact of ratings and the participants' age. Up to the age of 8, media ratings indicating restricted or controversial content reduced children's interest. Between the ages of 9 and 22, these ratings increased interest. In participants over the age of 36, media ratings again functioned as a deterrent to viewer interest. Although considerations of reactance might lead to the expectation that restrictive ratings would have a more enticing effect than descriptive labels, the meta-analysis showed that the two types of ratings did not differ in their impact. One explanation for this lack of difference is that, because violence and sex are generally considered taboo subjects, especially for young people, labels indicating their presence send an implicit message that the content deserves to be restricted.

Forbidden fruit effects have been observed in other areas of media behavior. A variety of studies of parental interventions suggest that parental restrictions on media exposure can backfire. For example, in a 2002 study involving adolescents, Nathanson reported that the more parents restricted televised violence and sex, the more positively their children evaluated these contents, and the more likely they were to view these contents with their friends.

Caregiver criticism of media violence also shows differential effects in younger and older children. Most studies involving younger children show reduced acceptance of violence when adults make negative comments during media exposure. However, a 2003 study by Nathanson and Yang found that negatively evaluative statements about witnessed media violence made 5-to-8-year-olds less positive toward the media violence but actually made 9-to-12-year-olds more positive. This backlash and apparent resentment among the older children did not occur when similar content about violence was presented in question form rather than as authoritative statements.

Warning labels and restrictions often function like magnets for media with questionable content in older children, adolescents, and young adults.

—Brad J. Bushman and Joanne Cantor

See also Regulation, Movies; Regulation, Music; Regulation, Television

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FORMAL FEATURES

Formal features are the attributes of media that result from production and editing techniques. Formal features include auditory features (such as music, vocalizations, and sound effects), visual techniques (such as camera zooms, animation, and visual special

effects), action, and pacing. These features interact with the content of programming to influence children's attention, comprehension, and interpretation.

Studies indicate that formal features play an instrumental role in children's attention to television. Perceptually salient features—those that heighten sensory stimulation—such as loud music, rapid pace, and animation, elicit children's attention. Not surprisingly, these features characterize commercial children's programming and advertising. However, research demonstrates that perceptually salient features alone do not necessarily maintain children's attention. For example, one study found that children lost interest more quickly in programs presented in a faster-paced magazine format than did those with less salient features that were presented with a continuous story line.

Children often attend more to features that provide information about the content of a program. Children actively search for television content that is interesting and understandable, and they use formal features as the basis for their selections. Experienced child viewers scan for features such as animation, laugh tracks, and singing that signal programs intended for children or genres they find entertaining. Similarly, children use formal features to determine whether media content is factual or fictional. Very young children may understand that the presence of animation means that a program is "not real." When determining the factuality of a program, older children learn to look for cues such as lower-quality sound and voice-over narration that mark television content as news or documentary genres. Studies have shown that children's perceptions of whether television content is reality or fiction can be manipulated by the use of formal features.

Formal features also influence children's comprehension of media. These features serve as guides to the structure of media content, marking such key narrative elements as changes in time and place. Children comprehend more information from television when visual and auditory features highlight central messages and illustrate abstract concepts. Research on educational programming demonstrates that techniques such as moderate pacing, singing, and children's dialogue help children elaborate on messages and themes, process messages thoughtfully, and rehearse new skills.

Young children tend to have difficulty deciphering the meaning of some formal features, especially those that defy what is possible in the real world. For example, research has shown that young children often interpret instant replays on television as actual repetitions of events. Young children may also have difficulty understanding the codes that signal the end of programming and the beginning of advertising content. The similarity of features used in advertisements to those used in commercial programming may add to the difficulty of very young children in distinguishing between the two.

—Meredith Li-Vollmer

See also Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Television, Attention and; Television, Viewer Age and

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G

GENDER, MEDIA USE AND

The gender of a child has been found to have a critical influence on media preferences and uses, in conjunction with age, class, and ethnicity. Some researchers even argue that gender differences in media consumption are so substantial that boys and girls can be said to inhabit different cultural worlds.

The development of gender segregation is evident from as young as 2 to 3 years of age, when boys and girls start to develop distinct interests and preferences, including those related to media. Preschool boys already demonstrate a strong preference for entertainment content in television, movies, books, and computer games of action, adventure, sports, superheroes, law enforcers, soldiers, and the like. They move away from preschool educational television programs that present a calmer, nonviolent environment at a much earlier age than girls do, and throughout the elementary school years they maintain a strong preference for action-oriented cartoons, programs, and movies.

Preschool girls, on the other hand, prefer calmer programs that center around characters and relationships, including fairy-tale princesses, performers (dancers, models, singers), animated animals, and the like, and they enjoy preschool educational programs for a much longer period of time. They tend to continue to shy away from violence, horror, and action-adventure content throughout the elementary school years and to react fearfully to violent content in all media forms. Instead, they prefer realistic genres that dwell more on relationships, family situations, and romance, such as teen dramatic series, soap operas, and emotion-filled movies (known by their nickname, “chick-flicks”).

As they move toward adolescence, boys and girls continue to develop tastes that are strongly reinforced by traditional upbringing practices and the cultures in which they are immersed. Boys are preoccupied with downloading computer games that focus on narratives of competition and achievement, surfing pornography sites on the Web, and listening to music genres such as hard rock, heavy metal, and fringe. Girls, on the other hand, spend more time and energy communicating on the Internet with friends and strangers, searching for information on their favorite celebrities and programs, and listening to pop music.

Both boys and girls seem to be attracted to what is accepted in their culture as gender-appropriate technologies, contents, behaviors, and role models. However, most media offer a much wider diversity and quantity of male characters as role models and cater more to boys’ tastes. Broadcasters and producers of other media texts for children prefer to target boys, rather than girls or mixed audiences, for three reasons: First, they assume that boys control viewing habits in the home, as they are more likely to “control the remote-control” and to assert their tastes. Second, producers generally believe that girls will watch boys’ programs, play boys’ computer games, or go to boys’ movies, but not vice versa, as Western culture is more tolerant of girls who are “tomboys” than of boys who are perceived as feminized. Finally, they argue that boys are more susceptible to persuasive messages of commercials for program-related toys and products and spend more money purchasing

them. The marketing potential of children and youth culture is thus directly tied into children's media uses and preferences.

A study of children and youth conducted in the 1990s in 12 European countries demonstrated, too, that boys continue to be more technologically oriented than girls. On the whole, their bedrooms were more equipped with media (e.g., they had their own television set with cable or satellite connections and VCR, computer with CD-ROM and Internet connection, television-linked games and machines, and such). In terms of actual use, however, television appealed to boys and girls to the same degree, whereas computer and television-related gaming was much more prevalent among boys. Girls, on the other hand, listened more to music and read more than boys. Girls had a preference for books and magazines, whereas the boys who did read preferred comics and newspapers.

These differing patterns of usage tend to become more marked as children grow older and are affected more by the strong socializing forces of parents, peers, schools, and the surrounding culture. The family environment often offers strong reinforcements for such segregation. For example, girls often watch the same programs with their sisters and mothers, while boys watch the same programs with their brothers and fathers, thus guarding their separate, gendered space at home. Similarly, traditional assumptions about boys being more technologically oriented than girls is often reinforced at home, where boys may be given priority in access and use of the computer and consulted more about technical aspects of the machines or problems with programs, and where mothers may serve as negative role models.

The gender differences described above have been found across a wide range of studies. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that, as perceptions of gender differences in society change, so does the consumption of media. As a result, an overlap seems to be developing in the preferences and uses of boys and girls. For example, many girls love to watch sports, and many boys enjoy soap operas. Many girls are computer "wizards," and many boys are carried away reading about wizards. Thus, the role of media in the construction of gender differences remains fluid, complicated, and ever changing.

—Dafna Lemish

See also Computer Use, Gender and; Electronic Games, Gender and; Internet Use, Gender and; Gender Identity Development; Gender Roles on Television

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GENDER IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

From a sociological perspective, *gender identity* is an individual's identification as either male or female, which is affected by societal and personal conceptualizations of what it means to be a boy or a girl. Gender identity development is particularly important during adolescence, as gender role identification and adherence to role standards get stronger as adolescents get older. The majority of theories about social influences on gender identity formation focus on how adolescents learn about masculinity and femininity from their families, peers, and social institutions. These theories of gender socialization have found that the media's dissemination of traditional gender roles reinforces traditionally held beliefs that children and adolescents likely also learn from their parents and real-life peers. It should be noted, however, that some research, drawing on evolutionary psychology, considers gender identity from a biological (and genetic) perspective. These studies posit that sex differences result from biological differences between men and women, instead of cultural or social differences.

In recent years, sociological studies began to show that social factors influence gender role development, and that gender identity, rather than being determined

genetically, is primarily socially constructed. These studies began to consider a continuum of gender identity that include an individual's identification as gay or lesbian. According to gender socialization theories, people also learn about gender identities from messages, texts, and symbols in their daily lives that prescribe what is appropriate masculine and feminine behavior.

Discussions of the mass media's influence on gender identity often consider the commercial aspects of American media. The production of media is directly linked to the capitalist economy, which ensures that the messages produced in the media are tied to garnering better commercial profits. Scholars have found that the very concept of subordinated femininity is tied to the market's need to keep women in an insecure and subservient role so that they will continue to purchase goods and support the capitalist structure. Similarly, recent investigations into media portrayals of masculinity have found that these portrayals encourage men to purchase products to maintain both physical and mental dominance.

Rhonda Gibson's study of the news media's portrayal of gays and lesbians found that newspapers rarely discussed the everyday lives of sexual minorities; instead, their coverage often focused on popular gay characters in entertainment media. Other scholars who have analyzed the portrayal of sexual minorities in entertainment media found that these characters are rarely included in adolescent programming, although they are becoming more prevalent in adult programming (e.g., *Will & Grace* and *Queer as Folk*). In an analysis of the portrayal of a gay teen in *Dawson's Creek,* Michaela D. E. Meyer argued that depictions of sexual minorities in entertainment programming typically are based on their interactions with heterosexual peers. Portrayals of gays and lesbians like that in *Dawson's Creek,* Meyer posited, allow the audience to "safely" see homosexuality outside of a context of sexual desire.

Mass communication scholars who have explored the media's role in gender identity development have found that the limited portrayals of gender roles disseminated by the media and other socializing agents help create gender-role stereotypes. Gender-role stereotypes are exaggerations of gender differences that reinforce a false dichotomy between male and female roles while dictating appropriate masculine and feminine behavior. Content analyses of the mass media have found that these gender role stereotypes put forward appropriate occupations, physical beauty, and relationship interactions for males and females. Very little research has explored the media's portrayal of gays and lesbians. Most of the existing research has identified that these portrayals often show stereotypical, negative, and exaggerated gender roles for gays and lesbians.

Although much research into gender identity and the mass media is based on content analyses of various media texts to catalogue existing gender-role stereotypes, some research has connected media exposure to beliefs about appropriate behavior for males and females. For example, previous research has found that increased television viewing was associated with identifying household chores with traditional gender stereotypes (e.g., men mow the lawn and women wash the dishes). Meenakshi Gigi Durham found that young girls used the media to identify to their peers their appropriation of dominant femininity.

Other external influences may encourage youth to have preconceived expectations that may contribute to their interpretation of the media images to which they attend. Durham found that girls negotiated ideals of femininity, including those in the mass media, in their peer groups, which reinforced traditional aspects of gender identity. Yet some scholars have found a negative correlation or none at all between exposure to television and acceptance of traditional gender roles. Scholars argue that the mixed results in the studies trying to connect media exposure to gender stereotypes result from the difficulty of isolating the effects of television viewing from other mitigating factors, such as parents, peers, and other types of media. In reality, however, since the media likely influence parents and peers' conceptions of gender, the media's role in societal stereotypes about femininity and masculinity has likely been underestimated, according to L. Monique Ward.

—Stacey J. T. Hust

See also Gender, Media Use and; Gender Roles in Magazines; Gender Roles in Music; Gender Roles on Television; Gender Roles in Television Commercials; Sexual Minorities, Portrayals of; Socialization and Media

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GENDER ROLES IN MAGAZINES

Gender-role expectations are the behaviors, attitudes, emotions, and personality traits deemed appropriate for each gender; they depend on a socially constructed reality. That reality is constructed by various forces, including the media. Although television may be the most influential medium, magazines also play a part in suggesting appropriate roles for each gender. More often than not, the roles suggested are traditional or stereotypical. Women are encouraged to take care of the home, whereas men are encouraged to do everything else. Over the years, the messages have changed somewhat. Women are told that appearance is of primary importance and are encouraged, through both editorial and advertising, to believe that how they look is more important than who they are or what they do.

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

In the late 1800s, women's magazines put women on a pedestal and were quite direct in telling women what their roles were or should be. Edward Bok, editor of *Ladies' Home Journal*, wrote in 1893: "The number of women in business who lose their gentleness and womanliness is far greater than those who retain what, after all, are women's best and chief qualities."

Without being quite so blunt, women's home and service magazines (*Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal,* and *McCall's,* among others) have always emphasized traditional messages, such as family issues, child care, cooking, and housekeeping. Fashion and beauty magazines (*Cosmopolitan* and *Glamour*, among others) focus not only on fashion and beauty but also on male-female relationships. In the 1970s, a new breed of magazine came along. With titles such as *Working Woman* and *New Woman*, they offered hope for content slightly less traditional than the older magazines. However, a 1995 issue of *New Woman* contained 12 pages of makeup advertisements before the table of contents and regularly run columns on fashion and beauty. The emphasis on fashion and beauty does more than suggest to readers—of any age—that looking good is of utmost importance. Who a woman is matters less than what she looks like.

Magazine research focuses primarily on women in advertisements, articles, and short stories in relation to men and occupations. Butler and Paisley (1980) summarized the research up to 1980. They found that, in articles, working mothers were portrayed unfavorably, traditional marriage was emphasized, and if women worked, they did so in low-status jobs. In short stories, few married women worked, and those who did work were primarily looking for husbands. In advertising, men had more roles, were more often employed, and more often had higher-status positions than did women.

Research after 1980 uncovered some changes, in part because of the birth of such nontraditional magazines such as *Working Woman* and feminist magazines such as *Ms*. The traditional magazines, too, have changed the world of women's magazines, if at a snail's pace. In the 1980s, more women were shown working outside the home and in a more positive light, as Ruggiero and Weston noted in a 1985 article. Analysis by Loughlin in 1983 found that, in fiction, the numbers of women with careers increased, and career women were not unsympathetic characters. On the other hand, the dependent heroine—defined as one who depends on others for identity or survival—has long been a part of women's magazine fiction and was found as late as 1997. In Peirce's study, fewer than half of the main characters solved their own problems and thus were dependent on others to solve problems for them.

MEN'S MAGAZINES

Men's magazines in the past focused on activities such as sports (*Sports Illustrated*) or naked women (*Playboy*), and they did not in the least resemble women's magazines, the sole purpose of which was to create insecure consumers. Now, men's magazines are morphing into women's magazines for men. *Men's Health* devotes much attention to physical self-improvement; magazines that have always had fashion pages, such as *GQ* and *Esquire,* are directing their attention to other matters of men's appearance. All this attention to men's appearance has produced men who, as women have done for years, now worry about appearance issues. Hatoum and Belle (2004) found that reading men's magazines was associated with concerns about muscularity and general fitness, beauty product use and dietary supplement use.

Some researchers, such as Anderson and DiDomenico, argue that the appearance messages are still gendered: Women are bombarded by messages that urge them to lose weight and become reed thin, whereas men are encouraged to bulk up. In 1999, Milkin, Wornian, and Chrisler examined magazine covers for gender differences and found that women's magazines were more likely to contain blurbs about diet, exercise, and cosmetic surgery, whereas men's magazine covers talked more about the outside world and less about changing one's body shape. Articles on weight loss were rare in the men's magazines. Effects of these differences go beyond dissatisfaction with one's body shape. Despite more attention in the media to men's appearance, what men do is still more important than what their muscles look like. Women, particularly young women, are likely to internalize the mediated messages of the thin ideal and attempt to reach it through dangerous dieting methods.

—Kate Peirce

See also Advertising, Gender and; Body Image in Boys and Young Men; Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Food Advertising, Eating Disorders and; Magazines, Adolescent Girls'

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GENDER ROLES IN MUSIC

In contrast to biological differences in reproductive organs between females and males, gender differences and the roles we assign to them are socially constructed and learned sets of behaviors and perceptions. The role of music in such a construction of gender perceptions is particularly important, as it is a dominant aspect of preadolescence and adolescence. Music is heard in all forms of media and is particularly accessible when downloaded from the Internet or through its adaptation to visual forms, such as music video clips broadcast on MTV (the Music Television channel). Music is used by youth for leisure, tension reduction, and mood control. It is a resource in their search for individual as well as group identity and solidarity and aids them in expressions of self, independence, and intimacy by appealing to many of their concerns, rebellious urges, and sexual drive. It provides emotional support and helps young audiences deal with the anxieties of growing up. Female and male celebrity singers alike serve as role models for

identification and imitation and are idolized by children and youth. For example, the way music performers are portrayed defines for the young viewers what is "normal," what is accepted in their society, and therefore what wins positive reinforcement, whereas what is exceptional and deviate is viewed negatively. As a result, such images have significant potential to contribute to young audiences' developing identities as females and males, their expectations from each other and from themselves, and their attitudes toward society's norms.

Many of the studies that have examined the portrayals of women and men in various musical genres have found that video clips of pop and rock music, in particular, as well as most mainstream television genres, portray a social world that systematically differentiates between the genders. On the whole, men are identified with "doing" in the public sphere and are portrayed through characteristics such as activity, rationality, forcefulness, independence, ambitiousness, competitiveness, achievement orientation, and higher social status. Women, on the other hand, are associated with "being" in the private sphere and are characterized as mostly passive, emotional, caregiving, childish, sexy, subordinate to men, and of a lower social status. The occupational roles presented in music videos, too, are often stereotypical: On the one hand, men are presented mostly performing manual labor, involved in law and order, and in high-status roles; women, on the other hand, are assigned traditional service, secretarial, and caregiving roles.

The external appearance of women, more specifically their predominant portrayal as a sex objects, is highlighted in the lyrics of songs, in the performers' provocative appearance and revealing clothing, in the association with sexual objects and settings, in camera angles that present them as objects of the lustful gazes of others (men, in particular). Even when highly visible and successful, female performers most often exhibit their independence, assertiveness, and power through their sexuality. The debate over the provocative video clips of the American super pop star Madonna in the 1980s and 1990s illustrates this theme: On one hand, Madonna's media image was that of an independent woman resisting society's ideological constraints that allocated women either the role of "virgin" (and the associated traits of asexuality, modesty, caring, submissiveness, passivity, delicacy, dependency, and so forth) or that of the "whore" (the independent, assertive, sexual woman who is provocative, active, and powerful). In presenting herself thusly, she consciously portrayed herself in various nontraditional gender roles, refused to be manipulated by men, and transmitted a sense of control over her own image and destiny. On the other hand, it has been argued that her struggle for independence remained constrained within the realm of sexuality and appearance that lies at the heart of the subordination of women.

Similarly, the Spice Girls—a British-manufactured, all-female pop group that had an unprecedented success in the global popular music market of the late 1990s—advanced the concept of "Girl Power" in popular culture (i.e., the celebration of the mental and physical strength of young women). Although portrayed as representing a variety of forms of possible femininity—whorish, childish, sporty, wild, and snobbish—as valid options to which a girl could aspire and imitate, the message of the five Spices was that one could succeed with such aspirations—as long as one adheres, first and foremost, to a particular glamorous, sexy look.

Portrayals of men, too, are often quite restrictive and traditional. They continue to be associated with aggression, adventurousness, and sexual lust, particularly in rock and roll and heavy metal music (often nicknamed "cock-rock" for celebrating traditional stereotypical masculinity and a misogynist worldview). This association is highlighted through the lyrics, the appearance and settings of the performances, a variety of audiovisual techniques, and of course, a behavioral repertoire that includes a disregard of rules, purposefully aggressive and abusive treatment of others, and reduction of women to their sexual potential.

Obviously, many exceptions to the above description can be found. Not all music directed at "teenyboppers" (preadolescent girls for whom consumption of music is mostly associated with practices such as dancing, talking with other girls, dreaming of romance, and consuming related goods) is about romantic heterosexual love, vulnerability, and self-pity. Indeed, many male singers, particularly those who appeal to young girls, manufacture themselves in the spirit of "new man," sensitive, capable of expressing feelings, and not aspiring to dominate women and other beings. Popular music has gradually developed as a site of cultural struggle over multiple gender and sexual identities, including gay, lesbian, and androgynous ones, as well as over ethnic and cultural identities. Yet, the studies that performed content analyses

of the various elements in music videos confirmed that traditional gender roles, although slightly on the decline, have remained dominant over the past 20 years. The influence of such portrayals on gender-related attitudes of children and youth has been documented in a variety of studies examining issues such as attitudes toward sexual relationships, drive for thinness, expressions of aggression, emotional dissatisfaction, and the like.

—Dafna Lemish

See also Gender, Media Use and; Gender Identity Development; Music Genres; Music Videos, Effects of

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GENDER ROLES ON TELEVISION

During the past 50 years, there have been significant changes in the roles of men and women in society, as well as in our sources of information and entertainment. Although there have been some changes in the media portrayal of gender roles, television's images of sex roles have not kept pace with the changes in the roles, status, and aspirations of men and women. Gender-role images have remained remarkably stable, particularly in children's cartoons and during prime time, when much of the viewing by young people takes place. Women, children, and adolescents are underrepresented in television media, despite some changes in this area over time. Overall, television is overpopulated by men, with some differences by program genre. Women are least likely to be cast in action programs and most likely to be cast in dramas and situation comedies, and similar stereotypes are common in children's programming as well.

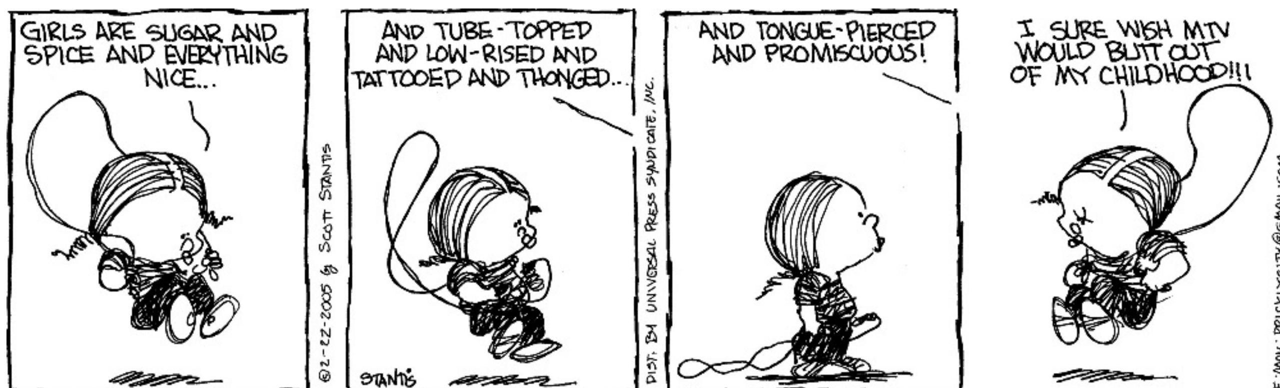
PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN AND MEN

In study after study, men have outnumbered women in prime-time dramatic programming, although the underrepresentation of women on television has decreased to some extent in the past 50 years. The earliest studies of network television broadcast during the early 1950s found three men for every woman. Most of the studies conducted during the 1970s and early 1980s found a high degree of consistency in the television world's demography, with men typically outnumbering women by three to one. More recent studies put the ratio at somewhat less than two to one. There are, however, differences by program genre, with situation comedies having a more equitable male-female mix and action programs having more men than women.

Although television characters have continued to move toward greater representation of women, the numbers still favor men in most program genres. The underrepresentation is found in programs that are new each season as well as those that have been on the air for several years. Moreover, except in situation comedies, women are often cast in minor roles rather than major roles. In 1999, Nancy Signorielli and Aaron Bacue found that the proportion of women in leading and supporting roles increased significantly and steadily between 1967 and 1998, moving from 24% of the characters in 1967 to a high of 43% in 1996 and down to 38% in the spring of 1998. There is also some evidence that some of the programs of the 1990s present more negative than positive characterizations, compared to programs seen in the early years of television.

Similar patterns are found in cable programming, even though cable, because of its numerous channels, has been heralded for its likelihood to provide greater diversity. Nevertheless, the patterns of underrepresentation in broadcast programming are also found in cable programs, with males continuing to outnumber women by two or three to one. The male-female distribution is even more lopsided when programs are examined that air during the prime-time hours on channels that can be received only by cable (i.e., programs not found on the network broadcast channels).

Women in prime time are almost always depicted as younger than their male counterparts who, in turn, are portrayed as older and wiser. Moreover, as female characters age, they become decreasingly significant to the plot, and the few older characters who appear typically lack clearly defined roles. In addition, as



characters age, the life cycle roles of men and women differ: Older men (65 or older) maintain their positions as active, settled, mature adults, yet older women are more likely to be designated as elderly.

The media, particularly television, rarely cast unattractive people in any roles. The images of women's and men's bodies are very stereotyped. The women on television typically have thin, almost perfect bodies. Their weight is judged as average or below average, and very few (fewer than 1 in 10) are even somewhat overweight. Moreover, these characters, particularly those who are quite thin, are often told that they look good, which serves to reinforce the ultra-thin image. On the other hand, the media ideal for men has become more muscular. Last but certainly not least, women on television are more likely to have blond, red, or auburn hair than black or brown hair.

Signorielli (1997) found that the programs favored by adolescent girls present rather mixed messages. Many female characters are positive role models, independent women who can solve problems. Yet, these same programs contain many stereotypical messages about relationships, careers, and appearance, particularly for the young women characters. For example, 4 out of 10 of the men are seen "on the job," compared to only 1 in 4 of the women. Similarly, 4 out of 10 of the women, compared to about 1 in 3 of the men, talk about specific romantic relationships, and 1 in 4 of the women, compared to fewer than 1 in 5 of the men, are seen dating. The women in these programs also are more likely than the men to participate in activities best described as stereotypically female: grooming or preening, doing dishes, cooking, and shopping.

PORTRAYALS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Children and adolescents have been consistently underrepresented in prime-time programs. Children who are 10 or younger make up about 15% of the U.S. population but only 1% of the characters in prime-time programs, equally divided between boys and girls. Children on television typically play comic roles and are less important than the adult characters. Children, particularly the young boys, are more likely to be victims of violence than older characters. Adolescents make up 14% of the U.S. population, evenly divided between those in the early and later adolescent years. On television, early adolescent boys and girls represent fewer than 3% of the characters, whereas older adolescents (between the ages of 15 and 19) make up 10% of the characters. Interestingly, older adolescent girls appear more frequently than older adolescent boys.

Nancy Signorielli (1987) found that children and adolescents in prime time typically are "good" or "successful" rather than "bad" or "unsuccessful," and younger characters are often in light or comic roles compared to serious ones. They are also found in situation comedies or serious dramas rather than in action-adventure programs. In addition, family life is more important for children and adolescents than for older characters in prime-time programs.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

Female characters are especially shortchanged and underrepresented on children's programs. Research

has consistently found that men outnumber women by four or five to one in cartoons and that, once again, females are presented in very stereotypical roles. Gender-role portrayals also do not differ in programs based on toys, compared to those that have no relationship to children's toys. Similarly, in children's programs males tend to be aggressive and are often told that their behaviors are not appropriate. Public television programs for children, although better on some dimensions, still fall short in relation to basic demography. Female characters are underrepresented, although their roles are not as stereotyped as those in programs on broadcast television or cable.

Even though female underrepresentation and many stereotypes were present in the cartoons of the 1990s, there have been some changes. Female cartoon characters found in the cartoons of the 1990s are more assertive, intelligent, and independent and are seen in more leadership roles than female characters in the cartoons of the 1970s and 1980s. Nevertheless, female characters are also more likely than male characters to be portrayed in traditionally stereotypic ways; they are more emotional, romantic, affectionate, domestic, supportive, and polite. Male characters also changed during the 1990s; today, male characters are presented as more intelligent, more technical, more aggressive, and as asking and answering more questions but bragging less. Continuing the stereotypes prevalent in cartoons, male characters in traditional action and comic cartoons are more aggressive than the female characters. On the other hand, there are fewer gender-stereotyped behaviors in the educational and nontraditional children's cartoons of the late 1990s.

Although the basic message about gender roles on television relies heavily on stereotypes, it would be incorrect to say that change had not occurred or that nontraditional women do not appear on television; it is just that these images are not found consistently. Most of us can easily cite examples of women who are not stereotyped. Yet, some of the programs of the late 1990s and into the 21st century (e.g., *Ally McBeal, Felicity*) have female characters who break with the stereotypes on one dimension (e.g., occupation), but fall back upon traditional stereotypes when involved in or dealing with romantic relationships. Similarly, some of the recent cartoons geared toward young girls (e.g., *Powerpuff Girls* and *Wings*) that show girls in more aggressive and assertive roles also have the girls look to male characters for help.

The underrepresentation of women and the gender stereotypes in television send a clear message to audiences: Women are not as important as men or are only important when viewed in the narrow confines of situation comedies. It thus seems logical to conclude that, until women are shown frequently and in numerous roles representing the full range of their capabilities and experiences, the effects of television on conceptions of gender roles will remain deleterious to true social equality of men and women.

—Nancy Signorielli

See also Cartoons, Gender Representation in; Media Genre Preferences

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GENDER ROLES IN TELEVISION COMMERCIALS

Although gender stereotyping in television advertising has decreased somewhat since gender roles in television commercials were first studied in the 1970s, such stereotyping remains today, especially in advertising on American television. However, there is some evidence that adolescents are exhibiting critical thinking in viewing such ads.

EARLY STUDIES OF GENDER ROLES IN TV ADVERTISING

In 1941, NBC and CBS were granted commercial licenses for their New York stations, but it was not until after World War II that commercial television began to flourish and expand. In 1951, the entire United States was linked to network television. It was not until the 1970s, however, that concerns about television's effects escalated and researchers began to examine not only television programming but also the commercials that supported television programming. Gender differences in commercials became a popular area of study, with researchers examining numbers of women versus men in advertisements, types of products both genders endorsed, occupations portrayed, voice-overs and ages of characters.

Gender stereotypes were quite prevalent in the 1970s. Men were the spokespeople for all types of merchandise except cosmetics and household products and were the voice-overs at least 90% of the time. Women in commercials typically were housewives, whereas men had a variety of occupations. Courtney and Whipple's 1974 examination of four studies found that women were overrepresented in family and home settings and were most often seen performing domestic tasks. Men usually di dn't demonstrate products—they were often shown benefiting from tasks performed by women—and dominated in entertainment, business, sales, and management occupations.

GENDER ROLES AFTER THE 1970s

More recent studies have found similarities and differences when comparing advertising in other decades with the 1970s. Women were still more likely to be the product representatives for domestic products, and men were more likely to represent no domestic products. Men did 71% of voice-overs, which is lower than the 90% of previous decades. In 1995, Pierracine and Schell also found a decrease in male voice-overs to 70%, as well as more atypical than stereotypical roles for women. Stereotypical roles included homemaker, secretary, and nurse as well as situations in which the woman is viewed as a victim, a nag, or a scatterbrain or in which the woman is not in charge.

In 2003, Rouner, Slater, and Domenech-Rodriguez examined the content of beer commercials and number commercials and found that a majority of the beer commercials portrayed traditional gender roles and sexist content. Number ads were evenly divided between sexist and nonsexist content. The authors wanted to know how adolescents reacted to such ads and found that they were critical of the ads depicting women in stereotypical and sexual roles, with females more critical than males.

GENDER ROLES IN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION ADVERTISING

Much of the research on advertising directed at children has found that the ads are gender stereotypical. Most studies look at gender of the main character in the ad, the gender of the voice-over, the gender of product user, and whether the product itself is gender stereotyped. The product user is more often male, and male voice-overs are much more prevalent than female voice-overs. In cross-cultural studies, it has been found that, although other cultures also stereotype, there are more gender stereotypes in American advertising. Typically, there are more ads directed at boys rather than at girls; girls' ads use more in-home settings, and boys' ads use more out-of-home settings.

In 2003, Maher and Childs undertook a longitudinal analysis of gender roles in children's television advertisements and found that gender stereotyping, although not quite as prevalent as in previous decades, is still present in the 21st century. They determined that there is more gender equality in the number of ads targeting one sex or the other but that males still outnumber females as the dominant product user, voice-over, and main character.

Two studies looked at gender and advertising spokescharacters, the animated characters used as product representatives, such as Tony the Tiger and the Energizer Bunny. Spokescharacters are prevalent in commercials directed toward children. The first study, conducted in 1999 by Peirce and McBride, found that most spokescharacters were male: 30 of 39 were male; 2 were both male and female; 2 were female (Mrs. Butterworth and Aunt Jemima); and 5 were judged neither male nor female. The neutral characters were the Scrubbing Bubbles, Snuggles Bear, Cheerios Bee, the 7-Up Dots, and Toilet Duck. A second study by Peirce, in 2001, found that this does not have to be the case, according to participant ratings in an experimental setting. The spokescharacter was better liked when the gender of the spokescharacter matched the gender of the perceived target audience. A vacuum

cleaner as spokescharacter was cuter and more likable as a female than as a male, and a male golf ball was more amusing and more appropriate for the product than was a female golf ball.

—Kate Peirce

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Advertising, Effects on Children; Advertising, Gender and; Advertising on Children's Programs; Food Advertising to Children; Tweens, Advertising Targeting of

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GENERAL AGGRESSION MODEL (GAM)

The *general aggression model* (GAM), proposed in 1995 by Craig Anderson, William Deuser, and Kristina DeNeve, is a general model of aggression that can explain many facets of aggressive behavior. It has been used primarily to understand the effects of media violence on aggression, including such effects among children and adolescents. The GAM incorporates arousal, affect (such as attitudes or aggressive feelings), and cognition (such as beliefs about aggression or aggressive thoughts) into a complex theory of aggression.

The GAM builds on a number of different models of aggression, including theories of priming, cultivation theory, social learning theory, script theory, and theories of arousal such as excitation-transfer theory. Within the model, characteristics of the situation (temperature, violent cues, pain) and the individual (trait aggression, current mood, attitudes) can influence whether or not the person acts aggressively.

The GAM introduces a three-stage process by which situations influence aggressive behavior and affect. In the first stage, situational variables (such as pain, frustration, or depictions of violence) prime aggressive cognitions (e.g., hostile thoughts and memories) and affect (e.g., hostility, anger), which results in increased arousal. In addition, arousal can carry over from other situations to increase an individual's arousal, as predicted by excitation-transfer theory. For example, if an aggressive child is playing a violent video game and becomes frustrated with the game, the child is aroused by that frustration, is probably thinking about aggression because of having punched other characters in the game, and may be in a bad mood because of losing the game.

In the second stage, the primed cognitions and affect, in conjunction with the increased arousal, influence primary appraisals. Primary appraisal involves the automatic or spontaneous interpretation of the situation. To continue our example, if the child is already aroused and in a bad mood because of the game, and then a person accidentally bumps into him or her, the child's mood and aroused state may increase the likelihood of the child's interpreting the bump as intentional. The likelihood of a hostile interpretation of the bump is heightened because the child has recently played the video game, which primed thoughts such as "punching" or "hitting." Given the child's mood, aroused state, and primed cognitions, he or she is likely to spontaneously interpret the bump as an aggressive act by the other person and to respond aggressively. An important component of the model is that arousal, affective feelings, and cognitions can influence each other to heighten the likelihood that the person's primary appraisals will lead to aggressive behavior. In the example, the child's bad mood may make it even more

likely that the aggression-related cognitions will influence how the ambiguous bump is interpreted.

The final stage of the model involves secondary appraisals. These are more effortful appraisals of the situation that involve more thoughtful consideration of various behavioral alternatives to the situation. This final stage can correct or override the spontaneous or primary appraisal that has already occurred. Fortunately, people do not always act aggressively every time they feel like reacting with violence. Factors that influence whether a person is likely to overcome the primary appraisal include how motivated a person is to carefully consider the situation and the time frame in which a person must consider how to act. If a person is rushed or is given little opportunity to consider various responses to a situation, he or she is more likely to respond on the basis of the primary appraisal. But if the person is motivated and has adequate time to consider how to respond, secondary appraisals are more likely to overcome the spontaneous reactions to the bump.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Aggression, Movies and; Aggression, Electronic Games and; Aggression, Music and; Aggression, Television and; Arousal Theories; Cognitive Script Theory; Cuing and Priming; Cultivation Theory; Electronic Games, Cognitive Effects of; Electronic Games, Cognitive Scripts and; Electronic Games, Violence in; Excitation-Transfer Theory; Media Effects, Models of; Priming Theory; Schemas/Scripts, Aggressive; Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to; Violence, Desensitization Toward; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Experimental Studies of

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GLOBALIZATION, MEDIA AND

Through the process of globalization, the political, economic, and sociocultural activities of one region of the world can have significant effects on people or communities in regions far away. Today's globalized world is characterized by extensive connectivity and global consciousness. The media play an essential role in globalization and have both positive and negative influences on children and adolescents.

The trend of globalization has led many news organizations to "go global." Global media are usually transnational organizations that generate messages or programs for dissemination to a large number of people around the world, which in turn quickens the globalization process and changes the social environment in which children and adolescents live. Globalization is part of the daily life of youth, affecting their work, leisure, entertainment, language, food, and so forth. In recent decades, technological advancements in cable, satellite, digital media, and the Internet have strengthened the role of the media, particularly the global media, in the globalization process.

The media's importance to globalization can be described in four dimensions that are related to young people's lives: the social, the political, the economic, and the cultural.

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

Modern media deliver news and messages around the globe, breaking the boundaries of time and place. The global real-time communication system intensifies social interaction over long distances and cultivates the global consciousness of young people. Satellite television and the Internet bring live news and information to young people's doorsteps around the globe. There are few places in the world today where a young person cannot gain access to a continuous flow of information, sound, and pictures from other countries and cultures. The global communication system helps young people reach out to the world and develop multiple understandings about things and issues. Many cultures are now visibly present in the everyday lives of children and adolescents through news channels, movies, comic books, television serials, and advertising. In earlier times, access to foreign media was the privilege of elites, but now most young people can easily gain such access. The lively exchange of cultural and social knowledge broadens young people's minds

and enables them to understand more about the lifestyles, values, and behavioral norms of other countries. Moreover, the global information dissemination network encourages young people to take action from a distance, such as making donations to disaster victims in other countries, showing support for environmental protection, or joining global social movements.

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

The media provide a sense of global bonding, turning people into "global villagers," or world citizens. Young people can witness an event on television or on online news sites simultaneously at the same time as the rest of the world. They may directly develop views on world issues and reflect on their roles in the global political arena. Young people get together and form transnational communities through online resources such as chat rooms, message boards, and blogs. In the cyber world, many children and adolescents cultivate "cyber friendships" with their online game playmates or global ICQ friends. They can also express opinions on various issues. However, the Internet is also a breeding place of international cyber crime. Children and adolescents may be seduced to commit crime or become victims themselves. Moral education and "global ethics" have been proposed to address these dangers as well as to realize the potential of online relationships among young people educated to become intelligent and responsible global citizens. Global citizenship includes the features of equal rights, global obligations, global participation, and commitment to take active steps to defend the rights of others and promote the common good of the whole global community.

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The media not only play an important part in the globalization of society; they are building their own global business empires. Powerful organizations such as Disney, the News Group, the Hollywood film companies, and international advertising agencies are themselves an expanding world, influencing the development of the overall economy. Multinational corporations and their advertising agencies treat the entire world as a homogeneous market. Children and adolescents are targeted as global consumers. They are encouraged to consume foreign media products and goods promoted by international advertising. Previous studies indicate that the flow of international advertising usually travels from industrial countries to developing nations. In consequence, multinational corporations have large local market shares for various consumer goods in developing countries. The global consumer society provides an opportunity for young people to experience a pluralistic world characterized by different forms of music, films, cuisine, sports, and fashion. However, children and young people are socialized by the media to consume and spend money from a very young age. There is also concern about the overuse of Western signs and symbols in advertising that privilege Western culture over domestic cultures.

THE CULTURAL DIMENSION

There are heated debates about the cultural implications of globalization. Are the media fostering a global society with openness and pluralism, or are they forming a homogeneous global culture? Some globalization scholars point out that the visibility of other cultures within one's own cultural framework makes young people aware that their cultures are no longer given but the result of conscious choice. They can embrace or reject their cultures. The fact that many of the most visible cultural expressions of globalization are American, such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Disney, and CNN, leads to concern about Americanization and the erosion of local cultural identity. Research in the cultivation tradition shows that U.S. television content seems to be more important to Australian school children's conceptions of social reality than locally originated programs. However, other studies find that globalization is in fact "glocalization"—a blending of the global with the local. A case study has shown that the globalization of Danish television has not eroded national identity. On the contrary, an increased preoccupation with "Danishness" is reflected in the programming.

The globalization of the media has not given rise to a single global media system. Many scholars observe that there have been both homogenization and heterogenization of communicative spaces. The media, however, play an important role in building a globalized society in which our children and adolescents spend their everyday lives. In some countries, media literacy training is put forward as one of the options to help young people to handle the media in this globalizing world.

—Alice Y. L. Lee

See also Computer Use, International; Internet Use, International; Television, International Viewing Patterns and; Youth Culture

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HEROES, IDENTITY, AND PARASOCIAL INTERACTION

Children today are exposed to a global repertoire of heroes and champions that can be accessed in a multisensorious, almost omnipresent way across a various of media. The heroes seen on television and in computer and online games are part of children's everyday life. The ambivalence of strengths and weaknesses, greatness and littleness, omnipotence and impotence with which heroes are labeled is gaining more and more importance as far as children's social development is concerned. Dieter Czaja even suggests that children need heroes. Children are reported to use these heroes and champions in their own identity formation, especially within the context of their individual, favorite identity themes. Children choose their personal favorites among these heroes and champions and use them in their own identity formation.

The extent to which children apply such parasocially interactive behavior in order to cope with their developmental tasks and everyday experiences depends on their cognitive, emotional, and social development. According to the principles of symbolic interactionism, watching TV is considered an active process of role playing with fictional characters on the screen. Hence, Donald Horton and Robert R. Wohl refer to TV perception as *distanced intimacy*; one must, however, distinguish between this *dissociated intimacy* and the identification that implies a partly subconscious perception and a strong adoption of the actor's role. Children may sometimes act only as observers of the interactions between media characters, yet at other times may allow themselves to be drawn into the events on screen. The latter may lead to an adaptation of the role model in the sense of what Cynthia Hoffner calls *wishful identification*, that is, a strong desire of the child to become like the admired hero—a process that occurs mostly with fiction or fantasy programs—or to what Julie M. Duck refers to as *similarity identification*, which may occur when the child watches programs with realistic content.

Duck shows in her research survey that young children greatly identify with cartoon characters and fantasy superheroes, whereas teenagers tend to model themselves on media celebrities outside their immediate environment (e.g., supermodels, pop stars, film stars, and famous athletes) as well as on "realistic" television characters who are older, more successful, or more popular than they are.

Gender is a major issue here. In general, boys tend to identify themselves with strong male heroes from faraway worlds, whereas girls model themselves after heroines who represent beauty and social virtues. Girls seem to be more "adaptable" in that sometimes they also identify with male characters, whereas boys do not want to—or cannot—orient themselves to female characters. The probability of an identification with a character does not necessarily increase when the child and the media character resemble each other, because wishful identification plays an important role here. The amount of media exposure is also relevant. As early as 1975, Cecilia von Feilitzen and Olga Linne pointed out in their survey that children who watch a lot of television show a stronger tendency to identify with TV characters and heroes than do those who watch less.

Research by Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink (formerly Paus-Haase) shows that TV heroes help children to cope with various role-induced expectations. These heroes provide a virtual space within which children can live out fantasies and desires using characters similar to their own social backgrounds. Children choose from the media according to the individual needs, experiences, desires, and fears that stem from their gender roles and their status in the family. The peer group, as the first group chosen by oneself and relatively uninfluenced by adults, serves the child for the purpose of playful ranking and role modeling. Media favorites can help them adapt to their social surroundings, back a superior status, or make friends with dominant peers. In a friendship, children use knowledge gained from media experiences to create equality and stability. Shared admiration for a media character and the swapping of merchandise toys vouch for mutual affection and create a sense of solidarity.

Preschool children already show significant gender differences in dealing with the media. Boys make use of media heroes to stabilize asymmetric relations—to prevail in their peer groups, friendships, and families, or to help them stand their ground against more dominant peers. Their heroes provide models for fantasies of superiority and protection, and, especially in friendships, they provide a repertoire of behaviors that can be used and tested in concrete situations, for example, when it comes to conflicts with friends. Boys apply these methods to internal and external conflicts. Girls use their media heroines primarily to reinforce a superior position, for example toward their friends or peer group; TV characters also serve as substitutes for lack of social interaction and as an alternative to a reality that seems too narrow from a subjective point of view. TV heroines may also serve as fantasies on which girls project their "helping" and "being saved" visions; such heroines thus allow girls to mentally and actually process their social competence.

Children do not usually immerse themselves in uncritical and unquestioned identification with stars and heroes. In certain social situations (such as having single parents or having unemployed parents), these heroes may become a "sheet anchor" for the identity formation of children. In such cases, children become fans, and there is considerable involvement.

—Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink

See also Infants and Toddlers, Developmental Needs of; Infants and Toddlers, Media Exposure of; Parasocial Interaction; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of

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HIP HOP, ETHNICITY RACE IN

Even with hip hop's crossover appeal, it would be difficult to discuss this culture without speaking about the racial dynamics. As producers and consumers of hip hop, the voices of this culture began as those of African American males and still largely belong to them. African American and Puerto Rican voices began the dialogue in the urban ghetto of America in the 1970s. Audiences could see negative images of the black people on the nightly news, and prime-time television shows regulated African Americans to small and stereotypical roles. The music scene offered little relief because many young blacks could not identify with the message of disco music.

In hip hop's early days, racial tension in America was high. African Americans lived in poor urban areas and held little hope for economic advancement. The dominant power structure exacerbated their plight by indirectly blaming them for much of the deviance in society. Hip hop grew out of this oppressive state. Young African American artists (mostly men) used their everyday experiences to let the world know how patriarchal society dealt with minorities. Public Enemy front man Chuck D often refers to rap as "the black man's CNN." Hip hop positioned people of color as commentators on black life.

Scholar Murray Forman argues that rap and hip hop allowed young blacks and Latina/os to contest the dominant discourses about race and class. By focusing on the space where hip hop culture was created, Forman argues that hip hop artists could testify about the black experience. It was a space from which middle-class blacks and most of white America moved away or had never bothered to understand in the first place.

Hip hop helped bring attention to issues of racism. In the 1980s and 1990s, racism and poverty were the subject matter of hip hop culture. As many scholars have argued, hip hop artists became the voice of a generation for many African American males. Andreana Clay studied the influence of hip hop culture on black identity at a youth center in northern California. She found that, even in today's society, where many recognize the social construction of race, black adolescents still use this culture to define their racial identities. In her study involving black and Latina/o teens, she found that, for these teens, their identities are tied to their knowledge of hip hop culture because it is their cultural capital. Being black is synonymous with being engrossed in hip hop culture. The African American teens in the study noted that anyone could listen to or perform as members of hip hop culture, but only African Americans can be authentic members, because of their race. Their views are consistent with Paul Gilroy's scholarship, which suggests that hip hop represents the "blackest" culture.

Political activists, middle-class blacks, and some cultural critics question what happens when young people, media, and society as a whole consider hip hop an accurate representation of the African American race. Black people are not a monolithic group. Indeed, hip hop speaks to a generation of young people, but some suggest that what it says about people of color reifies stereotypical notions on race. As *Essence* writer Joan Morgan notes, rap music videos in particular often show women in subordinate positions. They are, more often than not, merely objects of male desire, willing to do anything to be a part of this culture. More important, these images suggest to young girls that their only asset is their sexuality. These images are detrimental not only to young girls but to young black male fans as well. The images of violence and dominance that are often perpetuated by males in the hip hop community tell young black men that this behavior is acceptable because it brings fame and fortune.

In a study involving African American males and white males, author Fiona Mills found that the white males were titillated by hip hop. They embraced the clothes, the dialect, and the attitude. An important finding in Mills's study with respect to race is that all white males embrace the music but explicitly say that they have no desire to be like its producers. Mills says this distancing illustrates that race plays a key role in how white audiences use hip hop culture. As her subjects told her, they can listen to it but do not identify with the African American community. Furthermore,

her analysis revealed that these white male teens were vehemently against white females showing interest in hip hop or the African American community.

Bakari Kitwana's research provides a stark contrast to Mills's work. His work on white adolescents and hip hop rejects most scholarship that claims that, when white youth listen to hip hop, they are listening without any commitment to improving race relations. He notes that hip hop is just what black and white young people need to maintain a dialogue about racial politics. As the research described in this entry shows, the issue of race in hip hop music has always involved an "us-versus-them" dynamic. In the early days of hip hop, racial segregation may have been necessary, but Kitwana argues that it is not necessary in today's society. In fact, focusing on the black-versus-white battle stifles any progressive thoughts about race.

Kitwana also tries to dispel the myth that hip hop's young fans (black and white) are adopting the stereotypical images in hip hop. He argues that both groups are seeking to make their own declarations about race, not to conform to stereotypes. In much of his research, Kitwana implies that hip hop may provide young people with the political presence that the civil rights movement provided in the 1960s. However, it is hard to ignore the well-founded criticism of hip hop by older African Americans, researchers, and media, which suggests that today's most popular hip hop reifies the stereotypical notions about African Americans that the civil rights generation worked hard to overcome.

—Christa Ward

See also Hip Hop, Female Performers of; Hip Hop, Masculinity in; Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in; Hip Hop, Violence in; Hip Hop, Youth Culture and

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HIP HOP, FEMALE PERFORMERS OF

Female artists have been an integral part of the hip hop landscape since its inception. Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, Sister Souljah, Yo-Yo, and Salt-N-Pepa helped redefine the male-dominated genre. Many studies on hip hop and adolescents suggest that, when young hip hop fans see images of women as objects of men's desire and hear hip hop lyrics that are derogatory to women, they incorporate this type of behavior into their social and cultural experiences. On the other hand, some literature suggests that, when female hip hop artists are the creators of the images in music and videos, they reclaim their gender and sexuality. In her study on female hip hop artists, Robin Roberts suggests that, by exercising their power to control their own performance and image, female hip hop performers create an opportunity to fight racism and sexism in patriarchal society.

Through their music, these performers speak about the strength and power of African American women in the history of black struggles. This was a common theme among early female hip hop performers, most of whom were African American. They reminded fans and fellow male hip hop artists alike that female performers have a powerful voice in hip hop music and society.

However, negotiating power within a male-dominated hip hop community is not a simple task. In the 1990s, performances by hip hop artists like Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown suggested that exerting one's sexual prowess is the most lucrative and most feminine way to compete within a genre dominated by males. Much like the blues artists before them, female hip hop artists from the 1990s onward have used sex as a way to reclaim the image of the female body. Scantily clad women are no longer in the background of male hip hop artists' videos. They are front and center in their own videos. Studies of female performers and sexual relationships suggested that female artists illuminating sexual relationships between men and women are illustrating the central power struggle between men and women in society. More specifically, these studies suggest that sex is a powerful resource upon which some female performers draw to construct their sense of self-worth.

In contrast to the "sex is power" theme present in some academic research, researchers such as Polly

McLean and Joan Morgan question how the use of sexuality in hip hop affects the teenage female hip hop fans. More directly, Morgan argues that, when female images are limited to body parts and sexual innuendo, young girls, particularly girls of color, incorporate these notions into their everyday behavior. They become consumed by the notion that women are no more than the sum of their parts, regardless of whether such ideas are promoted by women or men.

—Christa Ward

See also Hip Hop, Masculinity in; Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in

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HIP HOP, MASCULINITY IN

As a cultural art form, hip hop music burst on the scene in the late 1970s. This unique style of culture and music, which incorporates all forms of rap, became a venue for artists living in urban areas to brag and, more important, to highlight the serious social and economic conditions affecting those living in the low-income areas of America. Since its inception, many researchers have argued that hip hop is predominantly the voice of African American males. Although many white hip hop artists, such as Eminem, have had a profound impact on the genre, and although hip hop fans span the ethnic divide, the most prominent images of hip hop artists are of African American males.

Recent research involving African American and white males argues that males tend to see hip hop as a masculine genre. Fiona Mills's in-depth study on masculinity and rap suggests that rap's hard-core image is what is most attractive to young adolescents. The young men interviewed for Mills's study contend that white adolescents listen to rap because they want other males to perceive them as tough. Young males gravitate to hip hop music in their adolescent years because males dominate it, and the research suggests that some adolescents use the images of hip hop artists to learn about manhood. More specifically, hip hop seems to support traditional notions that, to be masculine, males must reject all things feminine. In fact, a few of the males said that they do not listen to rap music in the presence of females because they consider it a male experience. Furthermore, the males hinted that females could not understand the meaning of hip hop because it excludes female voices and viewpoints.

Many scholars and various child advocacy groups argue that the sex and violence often depicted in hip hop music and videos reify stereotypes suggesting that "real" men must be violent, unemotional, and sexually promiscuous. Early effects studies focused on adolescents' reactions to various elements of hip hop, including nonviolent rap, political rap, or gangsta rap (a form of rap that glorifies thug street life). The manner in which aggression manifests itself in the lives of adolescent males is often the focus of research on hip hop and males. In some cases, the research notes that, when exposed to violent rap music, males tended to accept the use of violence and tended to have a greater probability of committing similar acts.

In addition to aggression, sexual prowess also seems to be a mark of masculinity as portrayed in hip hop. Many studies note that male hip hop artists glamorize their sex lives as a sign of manliness. Masculinity in this arena is defined by the amount of implied sexual activity in the lyrics and music videos. The fact that the focus is on the conquest and not on emotional investment reifies traditional notions both of masculinity in general and of masculinity for black men in particular.

In research involving the responses of Latina/o and African American teens to popular music, Polly McLean studied African American males who were exposed to songs such as 2 Live Crew's "Pop That Coochie," which is replete with sexual innuendoes and images that the teens related to power. A sexual relationship, in their eyes, must depict male domination. They feel that sexual conquests give them status among their male peers and that it is their job as males to initiate sexual acts. A few of the males in the study said that the song made them want to find a girl to have sex with immediately after hearing the song.

It is important to note that the conquests valued by males like those in the study and depicted in hip hop are usually heterosexual. In hip hop, masculinity is often directly related to sexual relationships with women, and men who do not adhere to these gendered scripts are considered weak. Hip hop artists from Ice-T to Eminem write derogatory lyrics about homosexuals. Research examining adolescent males' perceptions of relationships suggests that hip hop artists support their heterosexual cues.

Studies of this nature tend to focus merely on how hip hop contributes to deviant behaviors. Several scholars have argued that effects research, although valid in some instances, is too simplistic. In general, this research shows how adolescents act and react to hip hop at a certain moment in time, but it does not shed light on how these images are incorporated into the everyday lives of hip hop's young audience members.

Scholar Venise Berry's study of low-income adolescents suggests that, for African American males in particular, rap music provides an arena in which they can express their gendered identities. Berry's research involved low-income black youth aged 13 to 18. Berry found that the males in the study could relate to the rappers more because they represented strength and dominance. Because the rappers often spoke of the need to be "hard" to survive in the streets, the males in Berry's study could relate to that lifestyle as their reality. Rappers made it okay to be who they were. Another interesting finding in Berry's study, which is consistent with other studies of males and rap music, is the use of the "cool pose," which can be as simple as crossing one's arms or as complicated as displaying gang signs. Regardless of the gesturing, researchers argue that this simple act reflects an image of control and, in some cases, defiance.

Many researchers would argue that hip hop music itself focuses on defying traditional notions of gender, age, and race. Therefore, more studies should examine adolescents' understandings of these interlocking notions as they relate to hip hop.

—Christa Ward

See also Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in; Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in; Sexual Minorities, Portrayals of

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HIP HOP, PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN IN

Hip hop artists, fans, parents, and scholars have debated the genre's impact on children since the music hit the urban streets of New York City in the 1970s. Hip hop culture, of which rap music is the most dominant part, became a voice for artists such as Grandmaster Flash, Chuck D, and Public Enemy. Today, hip hop is one of the most controversial, yet influential, musical genres. Hip hop tends to be the voice of urban males. Hip hop artists' songs and videos tend to show life from a male, often African American, perspective. Consequently, one of the most common criticisms focuses on the frequent negative portrayals of women in hip hop music and videos.

Male hip hop performers often refer to women in their lyrics and music videos as "bitches" and "hos." Women also are often portrayed as the targets of violence or degrading sexual acts. Because women are often in subordinate positions in hip hop music, many researchers question whether these representations contribute to adolescents' understanding of gender politics. Research on adolescent males suggests that, when exposed to violent hip hop music, males tend to subscribe to the notion that they must use violence to control women.

In their study on rap music and teen dating, violence researchers James Johnson, Mike Adams, Leslie Ashburn, and William Reed showed male and female teens violent and nonviolent rap videos and studied the effects of this exposure. They found that females who are exposed to rap music that depicts women in subordinate roles are more likely to accept teen dating violence. For males, the level of acceptance did not have a direct correlation to exposure to rap videos.

Many of the early studies focusing on the effects of rap music on adolescent behavior have drawn criticism from cultural researchers for focusing too much on the most controversial aspects of hip hop. Scholar bell hooks agrees that young hip hop audiences are exposed to negative portrayals of women but argues that these images reflects the sexism and misogyny that exists in American culture as a whole.

With respect to adolescent girls, feminist researcher Joan Morgan argues that there is no sense of "self" within hip hop music videos, particularly for African American adolescent girls. The images in rap music videos present black women as no more than the sum of their parts. She notes that the mainstream popularity of Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown help to propel the materialistic nature of sexuality in rap music videos. Morgan also notes that, when young African American girls see these images presented by economically successful black women, they get a false sense of what it means to be female and what it takes to have a successful romantic relationship. Furthermore, Morgan argues, these videos have adopted mainstream values for women that give priority to thinness and light skin.

Female rappers were present during the early days of hip hop and are also questioning female representation within this genre. They have had a presence within this male-dominated landscape since the 1980s. Female hip hop performers argue that the portrayals of women in hip hop music and videos are hurtful and misguided. Many studies have focused on how female artists have reclaimed the images of the hypersexual and defenseless female from male hip hop artists. Artists such as Queen Latifah and MC Lyte have countered these images and have attempted to show that portrayals of scantily clad, subordinate females are no longer acceptable. In contrast, artists such as Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown go even further and exploit such images by selling their own sexuality.

A recent study involving 60 Latina/o and African American males and females found that Latinas and African American females feel embarrassed and defensive when it comes to the depiction of women in hip hop lyrics and videos. The researchers asked the girls and their male counterparts to listen to several different types of music and then respond to a series of questions about the content of the music. Responses from the girls indicate that they were ashamed of the way men treated women in hip hop music and videos, but they were also angered by the fact that the women in the videos allowed themselves to be depicted in that manner. They also noted that they often have to defend themselves against these stereotypical images to mainstream society. However, the males in the study remained detached from the negative images of the females in the videos, arguing that, in some instances, they depict the reality of some male-female relationships.

Although media scholars and parents have been criticized for their focus on the stereotypical portrayals of women in hip hop music and videos, continued exploration of the portrayal of women in hip hop—particularly as seen through the eyes of adolescents—would provide further insight into how this genre affects their everyday lives.

—Christa Ward

See also Hip Hop, Female Performers of; Hip Hop, Masculinity in; Music Listening, Impact of; Violence, Effects of

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HIP HOP, VIOLENCE IN

In the 1970s, as disco ruled the mainstream airwaves, music artists in the urban ghettos of America were creating a sound and a culture that would be around

for several decades. Hip hop culture encompasses elements such as rap, break dancing, and graffiti. Academics and parents have spent decades trying to understand the appeal of this culture to young people. In the early days, young African Americans embraced hip hop culture as a way to reject a racist power structure. Today, hip hop culture's influence expands beyond any race or geographic border. However, its producers and the images are still largely African American. Much research has examined the impact of hip hop culture, of which rap is a central component, on violence in society in general and on young people in particular. Early research on the genre seemed to suggest that rap music helped to glorify violence.

As a culture, hip hop encompasses several forms of rap music, gesture, and attitude. "Gangsta" rap, or hard-core rap, seems to be at the center of much criticism. For decades, researchers have explored the effects of rap music on adolescent behavior. In one of the early studies on rap music and teen dating violence, James Johnson, Michael Adams, Leslie Ashburn, and William Reed discovered that adolescents accepted violent behavior after being exposed to rap videos depicting violence. The researchers interviewed 60 African American males and females aged 11 to 16. In the study, the researchers exposed the participants to violent and nonviolent rap videos. They then asked the adolescents to provide their reactions to a story about teenage dating violence. The most significant finding of this study is that the girls who were exposed to violent rap music videos tended to be more accepting of violent behavior in relationships. The results of the study suggest that exposure to rap videos did not change African American males' acceptance of violence in relationships. The researchers suggested that this might be a result of their prior attitudes toward teen dating violence. Although these studies illustrated the need to examine the effect of exposure to rap music on young people, they failed to put it in a broader context.

Many researchers note that the violence in some elements of hip hop culture cannot be ignored, but they question whether demonizing the producers of the genre is the solution. Scholars such as Michael Eric Dyson argue that focusing on the negative aspects of any genre is too simplistic. He acknowledges that rap music can be violent and sexist. However, he, like scholars such as bell hooks, argues that the violence illustrated in rap music is indicative of the violence in society as a whole. No one musical genre or culture can be responsible for the excessive violence in America. Furthermore, the attention that media and some scholars pay to the violent nature of rap leaves the dominant power structure unaccountable for the violence in society. Scholar Tricia Rose echoes this sentiment. In her research on rap music, she addresses public's obsession with rap-related violence. She argues that media and scholars continue the social discourse that posits young African Americans as social deviants.

In their study of black youth violence, Jabari Mahiri and Erin Conner used 41 middle school students to determine how young people interpret certain elements of popular culture. All the students were from a charter middle school in a low-income section of a city in California. During the research, the students were asked about their personal experiences with violence and their perceptions of hip hop's representations of violence, crime, and sex. The results of the study show that the adolescents rejected the argument that rap music helps to perpetuate violence. Because of their everyday experiences, these adolescents argued that rap music is not the cause of violence. In fact, they, like many scholars, argued that the violent nature of rap music is symptomatic of a much larger problem in society. Another key finding of this study is the fact that the students used the violent images of rap and media's constant focus on these images to try to eradicate violence in their communities. In an effort to combat the media images that present them as "violent others," these young people began to change their behaviors. Instead of reifying the images that suggest that they must be violent to survive, the adolescents in the study said that they challenged these images by seeking help from adults before resorting to violence.

Other members of the African American community, from scholars to church leaders, are searching for ways to combat the negative images in hip hop. Many of them, such as Spelman College's Zenobia Hikes, suggest that the music once used by rappers as social protest has turned into a hypercriminalized entertainment genre. Young people are often hurt the most by these images because they cannot distinguish reality from fiction. They believe that violence and hypersexualized behavior are the keys to success for African Americans. Hikes suggests that young black females see these images and believe that being

objectified is the only choice they have in life. The black males see these images and believe that they have to be violent and sexist to be considered "real" black men.

Hikes and *Essence* magazine suggest that the only way to combat these images is to empower young women and men to question those stereotypes that seek to confine them, regardless of the perpetrators of such images. *Essence* magazine sponsored a yearlong campaign called Take Back the Music, which created a space for rappers, music industry professionals, and the African American community to have an open dialogue about the negative portrayals of black life within the hip hop community. They encouraged the creators of these negative images to take accountability for their actions. They encouraged their readers to reject these images by fighting back where it counts: with their dollars.

—Christa Ward

See also African Americans, Media Effects on; African Americans, Media Images of; Gender Roles in Music; Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in; Hip Hop, Female Performers of; Hip Hop, Masculinity in; Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in; Hip Hop, Youth Culture and; Violence, Historical Trends and Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in; Music Listening, Problem Behavior and; Music Lyrics, Effects of; Music Videos, Effects of; Violence, Effects of

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HIP HOP, YOUTH CULTURE AND

Youth cultures are often seen as moments of rebellion for adolescents—moments or movements that allow young people to distance themselves from the adult power structures that seek to confine them. Music is at the center of many youth cultures. From 1960s rock to punk to the rave scene, young people use music to carve out their places in society. For adolescents, this collective bond is much bigger than just the music. The music helps to create a culture that tells young people that who they are is acceptable. Since the 1990s, the music and culture that are the voice of a generation is referred to by many as *hip hop*. Scholars who study hip hop often use the term to refer to the culture, its music, and its attitude.

Scholars trace hip hop's roots back to the late 1970s. However, as most scholars argue, hip hop gained its prominence in the 1980s as it became the voice of African American struggles in urban cities during the Reagan administration. As young people in urban ghettos fought to deal with poor economic conditions and racism, artists such as Grandmaster Flash and Gil Scott-Heron gave them an outlet to voice their daily struggles to the world. Scholar Craig Watkins notes that youth cultures such as hip hop are particularly relevant to black youth. In his research, he argues that black youth use hip hop to reclaim and recreate society's images of them. Unlike other Generation X cultures that focus on mostly Euro-American styles, hip hop illuminates the voices of black youth.

Early research on hip hop and youth culture seemed to highlight its positive influence on African American youth in particular. As Carl S. Taylor and Virgil Taylor note, hip hop became a genre with which African American young people could identify because it allowed them to be "real" and to fight against a dominant ideology they believed to be intolerant and hypocritical. Researchers Douglas Kellner and Katina Stapleton suggest that rappers articulate the experiences in their communities and call for collective action to find possible solutions to problems such as violence and drug use. Stapleton notes that rap music provides an arena for pragmatic political action and illustrates how members of the hip hop community take action against hegemonic ideas about the urban experience.

In her 2003 study, *Keepin' Real*, Andreana Clay examines the specific relationship between black youth and hip hop culture. Her research focused on a group of African American young people at a city youth center. Clay found that, for these African American adolescents, an understanding of the hip hop culture is essential to navigate within their social worlds. It is, as Clay notes, their cultural capital. The adolescents use fashion, gestures, and language to gain and maintain their black identity within hip hop culture.

The challenge to authority in general, which often unites members of this youth culture, is also what draws the most criticism from media, academics, and parents alike. Images and lyrics promoting violence toward members of authority and other rappers are passed along as "cool" or "hard" ways to live. Furthermore, as many researchers studying the treatment of women, particularly black women, have noted, violence and sexual degradation are common themes among some artists within hip hop. These images are not hidden; they are blatant portrayals that young people not only see but incorporate into their everyday lives.

Researchers note that, for female fans in particular, these images may have a more devastating affect. Spelman College's Zenobia Hikes contends that images of women in hip hop are often restricted to body parts. Young African American girls see these images presented by male rappers and some female rappers and get a false sense of what it takes to be successful. Female artists such as Lil' Kim are notorious for promoting the "sex is power" image in their songs and videos. African American girls are inundated with images of women that focus on every body part but never on their intellectual abilities.

Hip hop as a culture may have its roots in African American culture, but its appeal reaches beyond the African American community. Many scholars note that suburban white adolescents also listen to this music and become active negotiators within this culture. White rappers such as Marshall Mathers, aka Eminem, exploded onto the hip hop scene in the 1990s. Even before rappers like Eminem, this culture seemed to give white youth a chance to use the music as a way to rebel against their parents and various school administrators. Furthermore, Eminem presented an image of the angry white male that many young people felt society ignored. In his book on white kids and hip hop, author Bakari Kitwana suggests that white young people's interest in hip hop does not stifle its message about racial inequality. In fact, he argues, it helps to cut down racial barriers—the more young people are exposed to the message of some rap music, the more they try to understand the complex nature of life for minorities. Kitwana interviewed more than 100 white teenagers and found that hip hop connects this generation much as other music genres did. It allows the young people to challenge the rhetoric of adulthood.

Although hip hop crosses cultures, the relationship within this youth culture has not always been harmonious. Young hip hop fans are by no means a monolithic group. The struggles between white and black youth are real. Past research on black youth and hip hop suggest that black youth are suspicious of those outside of African American community who adopt the style and attitude of hip hop. They suggest that white people are "passing" for black. In other words, white youth can adopt the attitude without adopting any of the "real" pressures of being a member of a minority group in society. Fiona Mills also found that white adolescents feel the same way. In fact, in her interviews with several white hip hop fans, the teens expressed how in tune white adolescents are with the concept of voyeurism. In their everyday lives, her subjects made it a point to distance themselves from the lifestyles perpetuated in rap music and the African American community in general.

—Christa Ward

See also Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in; Hip Hop, Female Performers of; Hip Hop, Masculinity in; Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in; Hip Hop, Violence in; Music, Rebelliousness and; Youth Culture

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HIV/AIDS, MEDIA PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND

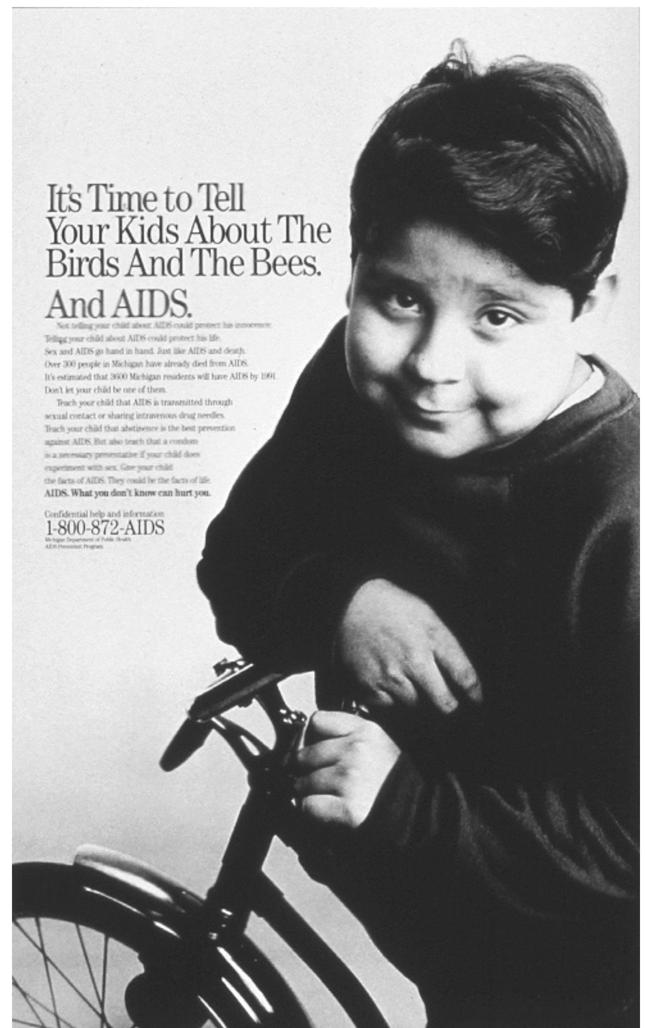
Since HIV/AIDS was first recognized as a public health problem, a variety of approaches have been used to inform the public about HIV risk and prevention. Recognizing that the mass media are integral components of prevention programs, educators, health practitioners, media researchers, and others have recommended the use of media-based prevention efforts. In response to such recommendations, media campaigns have been developed, and local communities have often been saturated with HIV/AIDS prevention messages. Children and adolescents need HIV/AIDS prevention messages that are developed specifically for them, and media-based projects have attempted to fill this need by providing age-appropriate HIV/AIDS information.

One of the first media-based HIV prevention campaigns, America Responds to AIDS, was developed under the auspices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The foundation of this campaign was a series of televised public service announcements (PSAs) that promoted healthy sexual behavior and awareness about HIV/AIDS.

After linking health communication to HIV/AIDS prevention, health practitioners soon realized that prevention efforts needed to be culturally and developmentally specific. Thus, prevention programs have been geared toward specific cultural and developmental groups, including children and adolescents.

One might wonder about the need for HIV prevention programs directed toward these groups, as children and adolescents generally represent fewer than 2% of the documented cases of HIV/AIDS. However, the need for HIV/AIDS preventative information targeted to these groups is evidenced in research showing that (a) the electronic media are a source of AIDS information; (b) elementary school children have reported on the AIDS Survey for Kids that they believe they are at risk of contracting AIDS; (c) adolescents, in particular, are at high risk for contracting HIV infection in that approximately half of a nationally representative sample of high school students reported having engaged in sexual intercourse, and nearly 7% had initiated sexual intercourse before age 13 (CDC, 2002); and (d) many do not use condoms for protection against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

In response to this need, a number of media-based HIV/AIDS interventions have been developed that are geared specifically to children and adolescents. A decade ago, in 1996, Snyder identified more than 80 studies of such interventions.



HIV/AIDS posters in the late 1980s and early 1990s often used photographic images to target specific racial and ethnic groups and to dispel myths about at-risk populations. This poster from the AIDS Prevention Program of the Michigan Department of Public Health, with its picture of an attentive child, was part of a campaign suggesting to parents that they have a responsibility to educate their children about HIV/AIDS.

Although video is the most commonly used format, these interventions have used a variety of channels, including pamphlets, video games, documentaries, Internet websites, TV shows, film, popular music, radio, posters, comic books, and rap music. Featuring messages about condom use, safer sex, and abstinence, in language that young people understand, the interventions attempt to

- Increase awareness of the importance of preventing HIV infection
- Increase the use of condoms and reduce unprotected sex
- Increase the perceived personal vulnerability to contracting HIV infection
- Increase awareness of how to get tested for HIV/AIDS

Many local, regional, and national organizations have been involved in HIV/AIDS prevention. As an example, CDC has continued its initial involvement in HIV/AIDS prevention with several media-based projects, including (a) *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself,* which is targeted toward people 18 to 25 years old and features a series of radio and television spots showing young people discussing and modeling protective sexual behavior; (b) *Street Smart,* a skills-building program designed to reduce HIV risk among runaway and homeless youths, which uses media developed by the participants themselves; and (c) *PROMISE* (Peers Reaching Out and Modeling Intervention Strategies for HIV/AIDS Risk Reduction in their Community), which is a community-level HIV prevention intervention that relies on role-model stories and peers from the community. The CDC also sponsors a hotline that offers referrals and resources on HIV/AIDS—the National Prevention Information Network (NPIN).

One private sector organization, the Kaiser Family Foundation, has assumed a monumental role in HIV/AIDS prevention among young people both nationally and internationally. Since 1997, Kaiser has partnered with media organizations to produce and promote HIV/AIDS messages geared to adolescents and young adults. The following are four public education campaigns currently sponsored by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Viacom entities:

1. *Univision: iEnterate!iProtegete!* Univision's iEnterate!iProtegete! (Get Informed/Protect Yourself) campaign was launched in 2001 as a partnership between the Kaiser Family Foundation and Univision, the leading Spanish-language television network. Targeted toward young Latina/os, the campaign provides free Web-based resources and print materials on HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and related issues.

2. *MTV–think.* Designed as a sex education tool for young people, MTV's *think* campaign provides website users with information about HIV/AIDS and other STDs. It also provides referrals to counselors and local HIV/AIDS testing centers. It is estimated that this campaign has distributed close to a half million copies of a pamphlet entitled "It's Your (Sex) Life: Your Guide to Safe and Responsible Sex."

3. *BET: Rap It Up.* The partnership of BET's Rap It Up, between Black Entertainment Television and the Kaiser Family Foundation campaign, is the largest public education effort on HIV/AIDS directed specifically to African Americans. Launched in 1998, *Rap It Up* was designed to educate network viewers about HIV/AIDS and to encourage African Americans to get tested. The partnership includes special programming, public service announcements, online content on bet.com, and a free resource and referral service.

4. *Viacom: KNOW HIV/AIDS.* The Viacom KNOW HIV/AIDS campaign comprises television, radio, and outdoor PSAs and other programming that encourages young people to get tested for HIV. It also includes programming specifically directed to African Americans. Messages focus on asking those at risk to "know" their status. This campaign recently launched an online marketing effort, www.spreadtheknow.com, which features various interactive content. One component of the Viacom-Kaiser Family Foundation partnership involves incorporating HIV/AIDS messages in television shows and movies produced by Viacom companies or broadcast on Viacom-owned networks, such as CBS, UPN, MTV, and BET, among others.

Some of the media-based projects developed for children and adolescents have been successful, especially when such efforts were accompanied by other interventions such as school-based efforts. The consensus is that these programs have been highly effective in increasing knowledge about AIDS. For example, the Kaiser Family Foundation

estimates that millions of people have been exposed to information about HIV/AIDS and related issues through its media-based efforts.

Media-based interventions have been less effective in altering beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. For example, in reporting on the effectiveness of the Family/Media AIDS Prevention Project in 1994, R. A. Winett and E. S. Anderson noted that an increase in parents' and teens' knowledge about HIV/AIDS was not followed by a concomitant increase in teens' HIV/AIDS risk-reduction skills. Furthermore, reviews of media-based interventions generally indicate that such interventions have had small positive effects on adolescent attitudes and behaviors related to HIV/AIDS prevention and the practice of safer sex.

The quality of evaluation of these programs has not reached a state-of-the-art level, and additional research is needed to identify the effectiveness of media-based HIV/AIDS interventions. However, it is expected that evaluations will improve, that the successes noted here will be replicated and expanded, and that media-based prevention strategies will continue to be implemented in programs designed to prevent HIV/AIDS in children and adolescents.

—Carolyn Stroman

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Sexual Information, Internet and; Television, Prosocial Content and

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HORROR FILMS

Why do so many of us enjoy being told scary, frightening stories? What are some of the consequences of such exposure? In light of the continued popularity and profitability of horror films over the past four decades, these questions have become the focus of

growing public debate and scholarly attention. Research in the past two decades has examined the role of gender on the viewing experiences of young men and women; more recently, children's fear reactions to horror films have been analyzed.

Horror films first appeared during the silent film era. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) is generally recognized as the first production of this genre. The period from 1920 through 1960 was dominated by gothic horror films, in which a sense of eeriness was created with tilted cameras, strange buildings, and shadowy, often exotic characters. Films of this period were often highly derivative and usually avoided depictions of dismemberment and blood because of strictly enforced film production codes. Horror films that exploited the inventive use of special effects to portray grisly slaughter first appeared in the 1960s. These gory productions typically pushed the limits of realistically gruesome imagery.

Horror movies that frequently juxtaposed erotic and violent imagery, commonly referred to as *slasher films*, dominated theaters beginning in the 1980s. The combination of violence and attractive girls was popular at the box office, and three of the most successful horror movie franchises (*Friday the 13th, Halloween, Nightmare on Elm Street*) emerged during this period. However, apparently in response to critical concerns about potential consequences of mixing erotic and violent images, a clear shift in content is evident in contemporary horror films. For example, Barry Sapolsky, Fred Molitor, and Sarah Luque report that, compared with those of the previous decade, horror films during the 1990s escalated the projection of graphic violence while essentially eliminating erotic imagery.

The horror film, which was long the purview of independent producers, has become a priority for major film studios. The ultimate goal of a major studio is the discovery and development of a long-term horror film franchise—such as *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*, *Nightmare on Elm Street*, or *Scream*—that will generate large profits from both story concept serialization and the sale of residual products (e.g., books, costumes, games). However, as T. L. Stanley makes clear, tremendous profits are typically enjoyed by almost all contemporary horror films. Isolating four recent films (*The Blair Witch Project*, *The Grudge*, *The Ring*, and *Saw*), Stanley outlines the huge discrepancy between the average production cost of $14.8 million and the more than $188.2 million in combined worldwide gross income.

Horror films are especially appealing to avid moviegoers—individuals who see at least 12 films per year and account for 77% of all theatre admissions, and who typically are single, well-educated, 16-to-20-year-olds from middle-class, urban families—and this emerges as a key reason for the continued success of such films. Equally important, however, is the fact that horror audiences typically are split almost evenly between male and female viewers, with many reporting a strong interest in the communal experience of being scared with their friends. In other words, horror films are, for many viewers, great "date movies."

This phenomenon was first observed and researched by Dolf Zillmann and his colleagues, who demonstrated in an experiment that an opposite-gender companion's affective reactions to horror strongly impacted a coviewer's experience of distress, delight, and attraction. Specifically, young men and women were exposed to a horror film in the presence of a same-age, opposite-gender companion who expressed mastery, affective indifference, or distress. It was found that men enjoyed the movie most in the company of a distressed woman and least in the company of a mastering woman. Women, in contrast, enjoyed the horror film most in the company of a mastering man and least in the company of a distressed man. Further, men who displayed mastery and women who displayed distress enjoyed an enhancement of their physical appeal. Building from these findings, Zillmann and James Weaver advanced the *gender-socialization theory* of reactions to horror, also referred to as the *snuggle theory of horror*, explicating some of the social motives for and social consequences of the consumption of cinematic horror. Richard Harris and his colleagues have reported fascinating evidence supporting this theory.

Obviously, not all consequences of horror film viewing are positive, especially when children watch such materials at a developmentally premature stage. Joanne Cantor illustrates many of these concerns summarizing her program of research on fear reactions.

—James B. Weaver, III

See also Adult Mediation Strategies; Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Aggression, Movies and; Desensitization Effects; Fear Reactions; Movies, Sexuality in; Movies, Violence in; Promotional Tie-Ins

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HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION (HCI)

Human-computer interaction is a thriving field of study of the interaction between humans and computers, with a focus on applying knowledge of human use of interactive communication technologies to the design and deployment of such systems. Interaction design, or the structuring of the flow of communication between the user and the system, involves users in the design process. With the development of new educational tools, electronic game toys, online sites and navigational tools, and filters, children and adolescents have become the focus of computer interaction design both as co-creators and as end users.

HCI draws from a number of academic disciplines, such as computer science, cognitive psychology, sociology, mass communications, anthropology, ergonomics, business, and industrial design. According to the Association for Computing Machinery–Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction (ACM SIGCHI), which is a leading international society for professionals, academics, and students interested in human-computer interaction, HCI research in the field of computer science focuses on the engineering of human interfaces, whereas HCI research in cognitive psychology is concerned about the user's mental processes and the analysis of human user behavior. Similarly, whereas the field of industrial design focuses on the design of interactive interfaces and the usability of such interfaces, technology research in the fields of communication and media studies primarily investigates the ways in which human users communicate with each other with the help of such technologies, both interpersonally and in mass-mediated ways.

THE HUMAN

Communication researchers such as S. Shyam Sundar of Pennsylvania State University and Clifford Nass of Stanford University focus on the nature of users' orientation toward computers and other media technologies—as either independent sources of information or simply mediums between sources and receivers. Under the former conceptualization, the degree to which individuals treat computers as human is an indication of their tendency to view them as autonomous sources. Several experimental studies in the media equation literature document the human tendency to apply rules of human-human interaction to human-computer interaction. For example, research by Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass has shown that we apply politeness norms and gender stereotypes to computers, respond to them as if they had humanlike personality traits such as dominance and submissiveness, and otherwise treat them socially by applying rules pertaining to self-other praise-criticism, self-disclosure reciprocity, and behavioral consistency, among a host of other domains. Research on such social attributions by Clifford Nass and Youngme Moon also suggests that these social attributions arise not from a conscious decision to anthropomorphize computers but rather from an automatic tendency to

apply rules of human-human interaction without being mindful of the fact that one is interacting with a nonhuman entity.

In fact, the socialness of human-computer interaction has been a fundamental preoccupation in this subfield. For example, an entire design movement, labeled *social computing,* is devoted to research and development of interfaces that contribute to compelling and effective social interactions. Emphasis is placed on research related to the social relationships in which users engage with computers and other users via computers when they are online. In his 1994 article "Social Computing," Doug Schuler has described social computing in terms of software that functions as an intermediate entity in any social interaction. The relationship between social behaviors and interactions with computing technologies has been the focus of research done by Christopher Dryer and colleagues. Another distinctive aspect of social computing is highlighted by some researchers at the IBM Research Division. John Thomas and colleagues emphasize the role of digital systems that can draw upon social information and context. According to these researchers, such social computing enhances the activity and performance of people, organizations, and systems. On a similar note, Adrian Cheok and colleagues call attention to the social, cultural, organizational, and interactional context that social computing brings to mixed-reality environments, which, they argue, is crucial for embodiment in such environments. Microsoft Corporation even has a social computing group, which, according to their website, is devoted to "developing software that contributes to compelling and effective social interactions, with a focus on user-centered design processes and rapid prototyping" ("Microsoft Research Areas," para. 9).

THE COMPUTER

For HCI scholar John Carroll and most computer scientists, human-computer interaction (also termed *computer-human interaction,* or CHI) is essentially a determination of usability. They argue that understanding and creating interfaces that are usable should be the primary focus of study. The strength of the interactive computing systems they build is assessed by implementing them among users and gauging their functioning along a set of measurable criteria.

The business perspective on human-computer interaction is summed up nicely by Gitte Lindgaard and Nicola Millard. For them, the value of good HCI rests in improved customer satisfaction and more positive brand image, which is achieved by systems that generate profit and value by increasing productivity.

THE INTERACTION

Researchers in the area of persuasive technology are more interested in the actual interaction between a human user and the computer, and they build and study technologies the fundamental goal of which is to change the attitudes and behavior of users. In the context of customization of new communication technologies, Marko Turpeinen and Timo Saari draw attention to the significance of customization of information based on its emotional and cognitive effects on different users of communication technologies.

Co-adaptability is another aspect of the interaction highlighted by anthropologists such as Wendy Mackay. Her primary claim is that an interaction between a technology and a human is co-adaptive, and users not only adapt to the available technology but also modify it to fit their needs. Study of HCI with this focus, then, is undertaken with the belief that the environment and human behavior affect each other mutually. Resistance to new technology is another aspect of human-computer interaction studied by some researchers in the field of management information systems (MIS), a field parallel to HCI. Scholars like Ping Zhang and Andrew Dillon have pointed out that HCI and MIS share the research goals of increased and practical understanding of the best use of information technology to suit user and organizational needs. The major areas of research in this field are user attitudes, perceptions, and acceptance and use of information technology.

HCI AND CHILDREN

Lately, children have become an integral part of interaction design. To begin with, children and adolescents are now routinely used in usability testing, and their input is taken very seriously. Libby Hanna, Kristen Risden, and Kristin Alexander of Microsoft Corporation were among the first to recognize the unique interaction styles of children when they developed guidelines especially geared to adapting test procedures to maximize the use of children in lab-based usability studies. They catalogued the likes, dislikes, and capabilities of preschool, elementary school, and middle school children and

proposed specific guidelines about setup and planning, introduction, and interaction with children both during and after the test.

More recently, children have been recruited by Allison Druin and her Human-Computer Interaction Lab team at the University of Maryland for partnering in cooperative or participatory design involving collaborative inquiry as well as immersion in technology. This unique technology design team includes seven children (ages 7 to 11) along with researchers from various fields, such as computer science, education, art, robotics, and other disciplines. According to their website, they are an "intergenerational, interdisciplinary team" that "pursues projects, writes papers, and creates new technologies" ("Children as Design Partners," para. 1). According to Mona Leigh Guha and colleagues, this is emblematic of a new movement or research area called *interaction design and children (IDC)*, which involves techniques such as "mixing ideas" to foster design innovation.

As Amy Bruckman and Alisa Bandlow of Georgia Institute of Technology point out, HCI research involving technologies for children can be classified according to the function or desired outcome, such as entertainment and education, each with its own criteria for judging efficacy. However, they argue that, with the arrival of the Internet, newer functions have become prominent, such as online collaborative learning and the need to shield children from unsafe and age-inappropriate content.

HCI AND ADOLESCENTS

Adolescents' computer use and its effect on their skills, development, and social relationships have also been a significant part of research in the HCI field. Research done by Myron Orleans and Margaret Laney found gender differences in the effects of computer use on the social life of adolescents. Specifically, they found that boys are more likely to socialize around the computer, whereas girls are more likely to do their computer work without compromising their sociality. The use of the computer by adolescents and its effects on their development are discussed in their extensive review of the literature by Kaveri Subrahmanyam, Patricia Greenfield, and Elisheva Gross of California State University, Los Angeles, along with Robert Kraut of Carnegie Mellon University. Their focus of research is excessive computer and Internet use and its effects on adolescents' loneliness, social relationships, and psychological well-being. Research involving devices such as instant messaging and computer games have largely allayed concerns about the promotion of dysfunctional social relationships by the new medium. For example, Rebecca Grinter and Leysia Palen note that informal talk, or socializing, is one of three primary activities that characterize teenage IM communications (the other two are event planning and schoolwork collaboration).

Research on gaming has also been a significant contributor to the HCI literature. Kevin Durkin and Bonnie Barber conducted an exhaustive survey of the literature and came away with the conclusion that computer game play does not have the negative effects attributed to it anecdotally. If anything, they found positive associations with game play. In their own study, they found that optimal levels of game play (compared to no play) were associated with such positive psychological attributes as family closeness, physical activity, attachment to school, school attendance, favorable mental health, and lower substance use. They concluded that computer games, when qualified by these aforementioned conditions, are a positive attribute of youth, even though evidence of negative effects exists in the literature. Judy Robertson and Judith Good have pioneered the use of computer-game authoring in order to develop adolescents' story-narration skills. Their approach goes beyond simply encouraging youngsters to play age-appropriate games (which by itself is quite educational) and enables children and adolescents, via specially designed workshops, to create their own computer role-play games for use by friends and family. The goal is to provide an opportunity for young people to tell stories through the emergent medium of computer games. In evaluating their Game Maker workshop, the researchers found that 12-to-15-year-olds enjoyed the experience and considered it quite engaging and rewarding. Encouraged by its motivational advantages, Robertson and Good recommend using computer-game authoring in the classroom to raise literacy as well as narrative abilities.

Research on usability testing with teenagers has also yielded remarkable results. Carolyn Milligan and Max Murdock of Iomega provided kids with drive installation kits, then observed mistakes and problems encountered by them in order to design child-friendly software. According to these researchers, teens represent the increasing number of mass-market consumers who are novices at using technology and who prove a

rich resource pool for research because they have grown up with computer technology, they have a mindset of invincibility about computers, they lack the biases of most professionals, and hence they are open, honest, and have a unique approach to technology use, including anthropomorphic interactions with machines. Milligan and Murdock use the term *GUI (Graphical User Interface) bloomers* for such teenagers, to point out that these children have had the unique experience of growing up with computers when the computer technology was growing up with them at the same time.

—Sampada Sameer Marathe
and S. Shyam Sundar

See also Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use, Socialization and; Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; Internet Use, Psychological Effects of; Online Media, Agency and; Websites, Children's

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I

IMAGINATION, EFFECTS OF TELEVISION ON

The question of whether and how television viewing impacts children's imagination has been debated since the medium became part of everyday life, and there is still no consensus on this issue. On the one hand, television viewing is believed to produce a passive intellect and to reduce imaginative capacities. On the other hand, there has been enthusiasm about educational television viewing fostering children's imaginative skills. This entry reviews the existing research on television's effects on children's imagination and evaluates four hypotheses on the impact of television on imagination that have been proposed in the literature.

Researchers have advanced contradictory opinions about the influence of television on imaginative play and creativity. Some authors believe that television stimulates play and creativity. Many others, however, argue that television hinders imaginative play and creativity. A stimulation hypothesis and three important reduction hypotheses are discussed following.

Before reviewing the literature, it is necessary to define two aspects of children's imagination that have been addressed in earlier studies: *imaginative play* and *creativity*. In imaginative play, children pretend that they are someone else, that an object represents something else, or that they are in a different place and time. Creativity is children's capacity to generate many novel or unusual ideas, for example, in drawings or stories.

Children's imaginative play is usually measured by observing children when they are playing, either alone or with other children. Children's creativity is measured in different ways. Experimental studies often use measures related to the media to which children are exposed. For example, children are asked to invent problem solutions, to make up a story, or to make a drawing based on the stimulus medium. Correlational studies have often used divergent thinking tests as a measure of creativity. A divergent thinking test requires that the child come up with as many solutions as possible to some open-ended problem. An example of such a problem is, "How many uses can you think of for a shoe?" and "Just suppose you hung on the clouds; what would happen?"

THE STIMULATION HYPOTHESIS

According to the stimulation hypothesis, television enriches the store of ideas from which children can draw when engaged in imaginative play or creative tasks. Adherents of this hypothesis argue that television characters and events are picked up, transformed, and incorporated in children's play and creative products and that, as a result, the quality and quantity of their play and creative products are improved.

There is indeed evidence to suggest that children use television content in their imaginative play and creative products—their stories, their songs, their dances, their drawings. A 1981 study by M. M. Vibbert and L. K. Meringoff showed, for example, that an audiovisual film elicited drawings based on pictures in the film. However, this does not necessarily mean that children's television-related play or creative products are more creative. There is as yet no evidence that the quality or quantity of imaginative play or creative products is improved through television viewing in

general. More specifically, none of the existing studies has as yet demonstrated that overall television viewing is positively related to imaginative play or creativity.

Although a stimulating effect does not appear to be true of television viewing in general, it has been suggested that educational viewing might stimulate children's imagination. Two studies, one by Jerome and Dorothy Singer and the other by Daniel Anderson and his colleagues, have shown that educational children's programs such as *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* and *Sesame Street* can promote imaginative play and creativity in both the short term and the longer term.

THE PASSIVITY HYPOTHESIS

Adherents of the passivity hypothesis see television as an "easy" medium, requiring little mental effort. With a minimum of mental effort, the child viewer consumes fantasies produced by others. According to the passivity hypothesis, this leads to a passive "let you entertain me" attitude that undermines children's willingness to use their own imagination in play and creative products.

Despite popular stereotypes of children just sitting and staring at the screen, several studies suggest that, cognitively, the child viewer is far from passive when watching television. This does not necessarily imply that the amount of mental effort children invest in processing television programs is large. Gabriel Salomon has demonstrated that, for older elementary school children, television viewing requires less mental effort than does reading. However, it has never been investigated whether this leads to a general tendency to expend little mental effort, including a diminished tendency to invest mental effort in imaginative play or creative activities.

Of course, child viewers consume fantasies produced by others, but there is little reason to assume that this leads to reductions in fantasy play or creativity. Children who read stories, listen to radio stories, or watch plays also consume fantasies produced by others. But nobody has ever argued that print stories or theater hinder children's imaginative play or creativity. Therefore, there is little reason to assume that television's reductive effect on imaginative play and creativity is caused by a television-induced, passive, "let-you-entertain-me" attitude.

THE RAPID PACING HYPOTHESIS

The rapid pacing hypothesis attributes television's reductive effect on imaginative play creativity to the rapid pace of television programs. According to this hypothesis, the child viewer is confronted with images that must be instantaneously processed, because scenes are presented in rapid succession. Children are thus allowed little time to process the information at their own rates or to reflect upon program content. The hypothesis argues that rapidly paced television programs encourage cognitive overload, impulsive thinking, hyperactivity, and a nonreflective style of thinking. Because both imaginative play and creative tasks require children to fix their attention for a longer period, the quality or quantity of imaginative play and creative products could be impaired.

Of course, rapidly paced programs leave children less room for reflection on program content than do slowly paced programs. Until now, however, there are no indications that a rapid program pace per se leads to cognitive overload, impulsive thinking, and shortened attention spans. It is no surprise, therefore, that none of the existing studies has demonstrated that program pace affects children's imaginative play.

THE VISUALIZATION HYPOTHESIS

This hypothesis attributes the reductive effect of television on creativity to the medium's visual nature. It is argued that television, unlike radio and print, presents viewers with ready-made visual images and leaves them little room to form their own images. When engaged in creative thinking, children find it hard to dissociate themselves from the images supplied by television, and therefore they have difficulty generating novel ideas.

Seven so-called media-comparison experiments have been designed to test the visualization hypothesis. In these experiments, children were presented with either a story or a problem. The text of the story or problem was usually kept the same, whereas the presentation modality (i.e., audio versus video) was manipulated. For example, half the children received the story in audio format, whereas the other half received the same story in audiovisual format. After exposure to the stimulus material, children were asked to complete a story, to write a problem solution, or to create a drawing based on the stimulus materials. These creative products were usually scored on novel (i.e., stimulus-free) ideas.

The majority of the media-comparison experiments showed that verbally presented information evoked more novel ideas than did television information. According to the authors, the television presentations

led to fewer novel ideas than the radio and print presentations did because children in the video condition had difficulty dissociating themselves from television images during creative thinking.

CONCLUSION

The studies conducted so far suggest that watching a lot of television might hinder children's imaginative and creativity. However, the research has paid little attention to the content of television programs. There is some evidence that creative children's programs may actually stimulate imaginative play and creativity.

—Patti M. Valkenburg

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Educational Television, Effects of; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Literacy; Media Literacy, Approaches to; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in; Reading, Impact of TV on

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IMMIGRANTS, MEDIA USE BY

Children and young people with a background of migration are often described as "between two worlds." The role of the media in the process of cultural change that accompanies migration has not been extensively explored. However, migration movements in Europe in the late 20th century evoked interest among media scholars in studying the media's importance in the process of migration, both for maintaining bonds with the homeland and for integration into the new country. This research also provides a useful picture of how immigrants use various media in developing their sense of identity. A positive implication of being both "here and there" when it comes to media output and content is that migrant families are alert to and conscious of cultural differences that range from differences in morals and values to differences in formal features of programming, such as formats and genres. These experiences seem to create reflexive and conscious media recipients.

IDENTITY AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Identity is a central concept in the behavioral and social sciences. Authorities in these fields claim that the identity concept is important for many reasons. For example, the quest for identity can be seen as an aim of minority groups who want to assert their distinctiveness and gain recognition. The globalization of the economy and of information flow, along with intercultural encounters on a hitherto unprecedented scale, brings the question of identity to the fore. The concept of identity is closely tied to modernity and the individualization of social life, that is, to the project of self-realization. Issues of identity are of crucial importance for people who are in the process of cultural change. For example, moving from a so-called traditional society with its expectations and role distributions to a modern society in which individuality is advocated renders the question of identity formation paramount.

Daniel Dayan (1999) stresses the need to study media use within the private sphere to find out about how the media are involved in identity formation, both in the maintenance of cultural identity and in the cultural appropriation and the creation of new identities. Furthermore, globalization of the media and new media technology create new spaces for cultural meeting points, which fact further emphasizes the need to capture how people in a process of cultural change navigate in the global arena of electronic media. As Anthony Giddens points out, new media technology also has also led to an increasing separation between the concepts of *place* and *space* in late modern society. The former refers to the physical location of a person, whereas the latter is independent of a specific place or region. For example, the Internet makes it possible to communicate and to maintain and develop social relations with so-called absent others, thereby creating a social space. Other scholars, such as Joshua Meyrowitz and Manuel Castells, stress that factors such as global travel, communication technologies, and mass production of identical clothes and other

products are making the world more and more interconnected. But Meyrowitz also stresses that physical places have not vanished and still provide settings for many of our interactions. Thus, the Internet may not only promote cultural change but may also help preserve cultural structures or patterns.

Marie Gillespie has studied the role of television and cultural change among young people in the residential area of Southall, London, which has a high population of immigrants from Punjab in India. Her extensive ethnographic fieldwork, which includes interviews and observations in various social situations, revealed evidence of proliferation and polarization of identities, a strengthening of existing local identities, and the formation of new ones.

Social scientists have for some time studied how children and young people use the media in the process of growing up. Their interest in media such as movies, television serials, and soap operas is well documented, and such programs seem to be mediators in the process of identity formation. The situation is, to a great extent, the same for migrant children and young people but is also somewhat different and more complex because of factors such as turbulent lives as refugees or movement from one country to another. Even second-generation migrants may perceive the presence of cultural change through their parents' eyes—through their narratives and life experiences. There is reason to believe that the media, especially new media such as the Internet, play a new role in this process of cultural change.

These conclusions are based on findings from a recent study conducted by Ingegerd Rydin and Ulrika Sjöberg, which provides a broad and detailed picture of how the media are used among migrant children and youth. It is based on in-depth interviews with migrant families who live in Sweden and who come from many different parts of the world (Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe).

TELEVISION

Television is the most often-used medium among migrant families, at least for those living in the West. Besides watching programs from global and national channels, many families also have access to satellite television that provides programs from the homeland. This pattern of television use shows its unique role as a central element in media use by migrant families. Television is not only a shared experience but also a topic of conversation among family members and friends.

Language and Roots: Television as Mediator

National television is of great importance in learning new languages, but at the same time satellite television is used for preserving the mother tongue. Language learning by television can take many forms; for example, children often have a better mastery of the majority language than their parents and may translate difficult words and concepts as parents and children watch the news together. Most important, however, is the use of satellite television to preserve the mother tongue and culture and to inform the children about the country of origin, thus passing the parents' cultural heritage to a new generation. The parents tend to stress the positive emotional value of access to homeland television. It becomes a means of strengthening the bonds with the homeland.

National, Homeland, and Global Television

Although migrant children living in Europe sometimes watch programs in the mother tongue, they have a viewing repertoire of global programs, including American and British programs as well as entertainment programs from other European countries. Parents, on the other hand, often have a preference for programs in the mother tongue. If they come from unstable areas, they may watch satellite television to stay up-to-date with the latest news on war and violent incidents. This difference may depend in part on language proficiency. Children may be more comfortable in the majority culture's language as well as a foreign language; for example, in many places, such as Germany and the Scandinavian countries, children may know English as well as the majority culture language and the mother language spoken by their parents, whereas their parents are likely to be more comfortable in the mother language.

INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE

In Western Europe, access to the Internet has increased rapidly since the end of the 20th century. The Internet plays a special role in the process of cultural change. For example, in their 2002 study of Trinidadian families who live abroad, Miller and Slater refer to an "Internet family" rather than a "diaspora family" because the Internet plays such a crucial role in maintaining cultural roots. They also stress that all Internet use (and media use in general) must be

contextualized for each specific family. This interplay between real life and virtual life has been widely discussed among scholars with an interest in cyberspace. During recent years, attention has also been given to how online life and offline lives are connected. Thus, these two types of experience are perceived not as opposites but as parts of a mutual interplay. In 2003, Bakardjieva studied online forums and found not only that the Internet creates a kind of virtual togetherness but also that actions and interactions on the Internet are closely intertwined with participants' offline projects and pursuits. In her 2003 study on use of information and communication technology (ICT) among Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese youth in the Netherlands, d'Haenens also stresses the importance of contextualization of media use, arguing that research within this area should consider variables such as degree of integration, as shown in language knowledge and social life at large.

It is also important to keep in mind that the opportunities offered by media such as the Internet have different meanings and implications for various social groups within Western societies. First, migrant families are often among those people in the West whose computer access is limited by socioeconomic circumstances. Second, Internet access it is not equally distributed in the European community; families in northern Europe, including migrant families, are "wired" to a greater extent than those in southern Europe.

Keeping in Touch: The Internet as Mediator

The Rydin and Sjöberg study shows that, among migrant families living in more developed countries, the Internet seems to be a way to keep informed about current political and social events, and in many cases it has replaced newspapers that formerly were read at the library. Other common uses are listening to radio or downloading music from the home country. MSN Messenger and email have been important complements to traditional means of telephone communication for adults and children alike. It is not a matter of new technologies replacing old ones but rather a combination of these. This different function and purpose of use is also stressed in a 2002 study by Daniel Miller and Don Slater, which found that less expensive Internet communication has replaced the telephone for casual information exchange. The telephone is reserved for important news exchange, on special occasions and lifetime events such as births, marriages, and deaths, or for children's staying in touch with cousins and friends in the home country. The telephone is also used for communication with those who have no access to the Internet, which is common in less-developed countries.

When they have a choice, children seem to prefer the Internet as a form of communication. Frequent communication is common among children who have recently arrived in the new country and may suffer from homesickness. In her 2003 study of 12-to-19-year-old Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese youth in the Netherlands, d'Haenens found that the extent to which children identified with their homeland was strongly correlated with their need to search for information about the country of origin and to maintain contact with other youngsters with the same ethnic background and culture. Internet communication varies among immigrants depending on the access their families and friends have to the Internet, which in turn depends on what country they are from and whether their relatives live in a city or in the country.

A main difference between adults and young people is that the Internet is a part of local youth culture and thus provides a close link to the young person's life in the new country. The Internet is used to chat with peers from school, to play online games (among the boys), to listen to music (usually mainstream pop music, R&B, or hip hop), to read about specific interests such as bicycling or cars (mentioned by boys), and to search for information related to schoolwork. The Rydin and Sjöberg study found that gender also plays a role: Boys play games on the Internet more often than girls do, and boys regularly visit sites about certain topics such as sports and cars. This medium has in fact replaced the telephone for continuing school conversations after school. Thus, youth share an online culture, an extension of playground gossip and interaction.

OTHER MEDIA

European studies also indicate that watching films on DVD or VHS is popular among migrant children. The choices reflect both cultural origins and the need to build new peer relations. The repertoire seems to be a mixture of Hollywood productions and movies from the home country. Some children also watch home videos of family events, such as weddings and other celebrations related to their cultural origins. These videos are also exchanged among communities of same origin. The same pattern is seen when it comes to music, although music listening is a more private

activity than watching videos. Children often have their own CD or cassette players, and they seem to have the same music favorites as young people in general, including rap, hip hop, R&B, and mainstream Western pop music. In addition, however, migrant children have access to the music of their cultural origins. There are, however, some variations in music practices between ethnic groups. For example, karaoke is popular within Vietnamese diasporic communities, whereas ethnic folk music is important to young people from the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia.

Little research has been done on the use of print media by migrant children. Swedish data from the Rydin and Sjöberg study, however, indicate that reading Swedish literature and magazines is seen as a means to learn Swedish. Because these children often come from less-privileged families, they do not always have access to books at home but borrow them from the local library.

THE NEW COUNTRY VERSUS THE HOMELAND

The concepts of *here* and *there* are crucial in immigrant families' lives. This dichotomy constitutes a main feature of the parents' perception of themselves in the new country. But European studies of migrant children from many different parts of the world indicate that this theme is less pronounced among children, compared to adults. On the whole, young people seem to be more integrated, and generally act as children and young people with a focus on *here*. Migrant children adopt the same global media culture as the majority culture's youngsters, not necessarily related to cultural bonds or ethnicity. For example, boys play mainstream computer games not only with peers in their local community but also with others in distant parts of the world.

The dual presence of homeland versus host country in the minds of migrants is a concrete indication of the awareness of cultural change. In this process of cultural change, which ideally leads to participation in society, learning about the new country is necessary. One important part of this process is knowledge of the language of the majority culture. On the other hand, watching satellite television can provide an important link to the homeland and can be a means to maintain or establish contact with the culture of origin to future generations.

—Ingegerd Rydin

See also Computer Use, International; Electronic Games, International; Internet Use, International; Radio, International; Television, International Viewing Patterns and

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INDIA, MEDIA USE IN

As the second most populous country in the world, India provides an immense market for media of all kinds. Between the traditional news media—newspapers and radio—and the more modern outlets such as television and the Internet, hundreds of millions of Indians are reached, informed, and entertained on a daily basis.

Moreover, thanks to the emergence of an economically prosperous Indian middle class (believed to number over 100 million people), the adjacent industry of advertising is growing, at the beginning of the 21st century, by leaps and bounds, further stimulating the development of diverse, financially stable Indian media.

With 55,000 newspapers published in two dozen languages, the most prolific movie industry in the world, and a rate of investment in TV advertising roughly twice that of the global average, India has rapidly become not only a huge media market but also one of the world's preeminent media producers and operators. An increasingly large, young demographic group has developed a ravenous appetite for entertainment-oriented media content, prompting increased attention from both media makers and media watchers. The increased penetration of the Indian market by various media is predictably attracting more and more scholarly investigation, as well as more discussion in the public sphere, of the potential benefits and disadvantages presented by such phenomena as television, the Internet, and cinema to the Indian public in general and to children in particular.

Bombay residents walk past billboards featuring a 1996 box office hit, *Raja Hindustani.* The movie follows a melodramatic plot familiar to all consumers of Bollywood productions: Two young individuals (in this movie, played by prominent actors Aamir Khan and Karisma Kapoor) fall in love with each other and decide to get married against parental wishes. Partly due to the formidable success of such time-honored plot recipes, the Indian film industry is able to claim the largest output of movies in the world.

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THE HISTORY OF INDIAN MEDIA

Like most aspects of modern Indian life, the beginning of the national media was heavily influenced by the British Empire's political and economic control over South Asia. As early as the 16th century, European Christian missionaries brought printing presses to India. Until 1780, however, no newspapers were published in a region of the world that was increasingly coming under the economic (and hence political) control of the British East India Company. The first Indian publication was a weekly journal, edited by an Englishman, that contained accounts of the British Empire's faraway battles, news about European affairs, and political attacks against selected English notables in the Indian colony.

In 1819, the city of Calcutta saw the emergence of India's first daily newspaper, and two years later the man who would later be called "the father of the Indian press," Rammohun Roy, launched three journals written in English, Persian, and Bengali, advocating for social reform in India, which they said was urgently needed. It was the beginning of a national press that saw itself as responsible for the education and emancipation of the Indian people. These concerns were shared by the media, which intensely reported on and debated the 1947 proclamation of independence from the British Empire and the subsequent partition of the region between India and Pakistan.

THE PRINT MEDIA

India is currently still designated by economists and political scientists as a "developing country." Despite its status as the world's 11th largest economy,

a significant percentage of its billion-strong population lives in dire poverty. As a result, as of 2003 the literacy rate in India was as low as 59%. The country's socioeconomic environment naturally also shapes the profile of its regional and national media in terms of the viability of the news industry and the public's access to information. Praised by outside observers for the relative quality of their content as well as their sheer number, the Indian print media can be faulted for their lack of penetration of some of the country's classes and social groups. Predictably, city dwellers enjoy higher accessibility to media than do the inhabitants of rural regions.

Upwards of 2,000 daily newspapers vie for the loyalties of the one quarter of India's population who are regular consumers of print media. Since 1966, Indian newspapers and news agencies have been supervised by an autonomous, quasi-judicial body called the Press Council of India, which has the power to censor publications as it sees fit. Regarded as one of Asia's most independent media systems, the Indian press has not entirely escaped the taint of a corruption that in 2004 earned the country a middle spot in Transparency International's ranking of most corrupted states.

CHILDREN AND TELEVISION IN INDIA

A rising standard of living throughout India's cities, coupled with a genuine country-wide explosion of broadcast media, has led to an increased familiarity on the part of Indians with the uses and misuses of television. More and more children below the age of 18, who make up more than 40% of India's total population, live in a world shaped in many respects by this powerful medium. A 2000 UNESCO report estimates that, as far as children are concerned, the distribution of Indian television viewership matches the distribution of the country's total population. Children constitute 40% of all viewers—a finding tentatively explained by media effects scholars in terms of an observed tendency in India toward family viewing (as opposed to individual viewing). According to a 2002 study undertaken by Suman Verma and Reed Larson, 73% of the Indian adolescents who watch TV do so as a family activity. This situation may have both positive and negative effects on juvenile attitudes and behavior. On one hand, watching television in the family affords parents an opportunity to enact effective programming control and mediation. Indeed, a 2002 study based on a sample of English-speaking (and thus reasonably affluent) families indicated that a majority of Indian parents have instituted rules for their children's TV viewing. On the other hand, the presence of parents in front of the TV set might lend violent and often sexually explicit images an aura of parental sanction.

PROGRAMMING AND CONSUMPTION

One of the major consequences of India's drive toward economic liberalization at the beginning of the 1990s was the almost instant mushrooming of satellite television channels. The heyday of the state-owned television network Doodarshan (which had enjoyed a monopoly since 1959) came to an end as global media giants unleashed an aggressive marketing campaign aimed at the burgeoning urban middle class. As a result, Doodarshan's most popular Indian epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*, were forced to compete with Western feature films and serials. The new kind of programming appealed to many of India's middle-class adolescents, particularly to those fluent in English (a characteristic of elite education in India). As far as Indian-produced television is concerned, however, no more than 5% of all programming is targeted to children, and virtually no programming is tailored for children younger than 5 years. The existing children's television is of low quality due to the low priority that TV producers and managers assign to preadolescent and adolescent audiences. As a result, children view much the same content as their parents: Indian and Western soap operas and feature films. Studies show that the typical adolescent viewer in India spends 2 to 3 hours in front of the TV daily, primarily in the evenings. Teenagers interviewed by sociologists and communication scholars have reported high levels of interest in entertainment-oriented shows, to the detriment of informational programming.

MUSIC AND THE "YOUTH CULTURE"

With the advent of satellite technology, the music television industry, driven by Viacom's MTV India and News Corporation's Channel [V], is quickly moving to capture the imaginations—and disposable income—of India's youth. Indeed, the two music channels are credited by many observers to have almost single-handedly created a veritable "youth culture" in India, characterized by an excessive valorization of consumption and self-image. In large measure due to MTV's and

Channel [V]'s popularity with adolescents and young adults, India's music market has become the second largest in the world in unit sales. Despite its ownership by Western corporations, the two music channels have built their preeminence on nationalist Indian music, often engaging with each other in a genuine "arms race" of "Indianization." Bollywood-inspired film songs and music videos dominate the channel's programming, followed at a considerable distance by the relatively new genre of Indian pop and the even newer, diaspora-inspired music, such as the London-based group Banghramuffin. Indian music stars manufactured and marketed by the two channels consistently edge out Western singers and bands in popularity surveys among the young.

BOLLYWOOD'S SLOW TRANSFORMATION

By far India's most popular mass medium (both within the country and outside of it) is the cinema. The biggest feature film producer in the world, the Indian movie industry releases more than 800 productions every year, more than double Hollywood's output. Bollywood—as Indian cinema is known throughout the world due to the concentration of movie-making infrastructure in the western city of Bombay—benefits from an immense consumer base, with more than 10 million Indians buying a movie ticket every day.

Unlike Hollywood productions, Indian movies do not generally cater to niche audiences. Few productions, therefore, specifically target the adolescent or young adult populations. Instead, the movies are predominantly an family affair, with members of three different generations often going to the movies together. Moreover, Indian audiences tend to engage with the screen characters more than their Western counterparts in terms of frequent loud commentary on ongoing interesting scenes. By and large, Bollywood movies still follow a common pattern: They alternate dialogue and action shots with song-and-dance routines, incorporate both dramatic and comedic elements, and include a romantic narrative (preferably centered on the traditional love triangle)—all in the span of 3 1/2 hours per film, on average.

In recent years, however, seeking increased revenues, many Bollywood movies have taken a cue from Hollywood blockbusters and have largely forgone the decorum that characterized the industry for decades. Whereas "traditional" Bollywood musicals avoided depicting even so much as a kiss between two romantically involved characters, recent productions have included explicit sexual scenes, profanity, and high levels of violence. Aware of the connections between the movie theatre space and the adolescents' penchant for group entertainment, an increasing number of Indian social scientists, community leaders, and NGO media watchers are taking a stand against the negative effects the widely popular Bollywood movies are thought to have on the psychological stability of India's youth.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Driven by a flourishing economy and by an abundance of software engineers, the Internet has established a strong foothold in India, with over 39 million users as of 2005 (a sixfold increase since 2000). In recent years, the Indian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has launched a campaign aimed at making it easier for consumers to purchase PCs (increasingly priced at less than $250 per unit), reducing license fees for Internet operators (resulting in broadband connections as cheap as $4 a month), and developing various language fonts for websites and email. Despite these efforts, the Internet is available only to a minuscule 3.6% of the entire population, with rural areas in most of the Indian states completely devoid of digital coverage. Indian Internet users account for 11.8% of all users in Asia, compared to 31% for China and 23% for Japan. Most of India's Internet traffic is domestic, but it is routed through outside exchanges in the United States or elsewhere. The 18-to-35 age group is the predominant consumer of Internet-based services, although the 45-to-65 category is increasingly familiarizing itself with the digital world. More than 98% of Indians online use email daily, with job search accounting for 51% of all Internet use and e-banking trailing at 32%.

—Razvan Sibii

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Adult Mediation Strategies; Advertising, Exposure to; Aggression, Movies and; Asia, Media Use in; Digital Divide; International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth, and Media; Internet Use, International; Literacy; Media Effects; Television, International Viewing Patterns and; UNESCO Violence Study

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INDIGENOUS MEDIA

Indigenous cultures are very diverse and have different ways of viewing the world; each has its own history, language, culture, and manners of expression. This traditional culture is passed from generation to generation, and although indigenous youth are part of the mainstream culture, they are also benefactors of the traditional cultures passed down between the generations. Many of these indigenous youth groups have recently flooded into the electronic media and have used every avenue of media expression from television, radio, and movies. Worldwide, there is a vast network of indigenous youth involvement in the media. The Internet and other media allow indigenous youth to be a part of global culture while also helping them to express their unique cultures.

Indigenous people have typically inhabited a country for thousands of years, but in contemporary society most of them have become minorities in their own homeland due to colonization and immigration. While the majority of people living in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, and other places are immigrants, the original inhabitants of the lands are the indigenous peoples, the traditional owners of the land. Some of these original inhabitants prefer terms other than *indigenous*. For example, in Australia, the people who have lived there for thousands of years are termed *Aboriginal* and *Torres Strait Islanders*. In Canada, the people who have lived there thousands of years are called *First Nations, Metis,* and *Inuit*. In Hawaii, the people who have lived there thousands of years are termed *Native Hawaiian*. In New Zealand, the original islanders who are called *Maori* prefer the term *Tangata Whenua*, or "people of the land."

INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND MEDIA

Indigenous media constitute a diverse and rapidly growing field. Such media appear so widely on the Internet and in videos, movies, television shows, and print (newspapers as well as books) that it would be difficult to catalog all media expressions. Additionally, cultural differences between indigenous groups make it difficult to ascertain and compare indigenous media. Some indigenous groups, for example, have strict codes of behavior about showing images; sometimes these codes of behavior are respected by the youthful generations, and sometimes they are not. Other groups have protocols for showing pictures of the dead, and still other groups do not allow graven images to be taken. Most indigenous groups, however, are very visual, and visual media have become a culturally congruent form of communication. For this reason, many indigenous youth groups have developed a wide range of media products to communicate their unique point of view and to have a voice in contemporary society. Ginsburg (1994b) calls this *cultural activism* and suggests that, through cultural activism, indigenous youth and adults bring both their politics and their culture to their media in an effort to be heard. Ginsburg (1994a) suggests that indigenous and minority people can use video, especially, as a means for communication both within and between communities and that video can aid the self-determination of an indigenous community by resisting outside cultural domination. Indigenous youth have taken this self-determination as a call to arms for self-expression. Australian aboriginal Torres Strait Islander youth have been leaders in this regard, as have First Nations and aboriginal youth groups in Canada.

TELEVISION

From the indigenous point of view, television may do more to promote negative stereotypes than it does to promote positive, healthy stereotypes of indigenous peoples. For example, in many Western television shows, as in Western movies, indigenous peoples are portrayed as savages and hostile enemies. In history, most indigenous peoples were actually defending

themselves against the hostile and aggressive attacks of colonists trying to overtake their homes and countries. Rarely does television show the impact of displaced tribes, stolen lands, broken treaties, or massacres. Hartley (2004) discusses the clash of indigenous culture with Australian television and suggests that indigenous cultural identities should be given more airtime on television to improve the way nations can eliminate the impact of such powerful negative stereotypes. For this reason, many indigenous groups are establishing their own television services. The Inuits in Alaska, for example, lobbied for a Canadian license to create the Inuit Broadcast Corporation (IBC) in the early 1970s. Two important stations are ABC's Message Stick and Imparja Television, both of which have websites and special programs for indigenous youth.

Young children's perceptions often first develop out of media portrayals. Unfortunately, Native American children first see negative or outrageously unrealistic images of themselves on television and through other media outlets. Merskin (2001) found that these images are a result of assumptions about Native Americans and contribute to negative stereotyping and racism. Merskin (1998) found that film presented more positive images of Native Americans than did television. Because children have television in their homes on a daily basis, this is of particular concern. Studies of the role of television in the development and maintenance of stereotypes are particularly troubling. Graves (1999), for example, showed that television reinforces and maintains stereotypes in children that potentially contribute to prejudice and discrimination, a finding confirmed by others (Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005).

RADIO

Many radio stations are devoted to indigenous music, and most of these are broadcast over the Internet. KNBA 90.3FM, for example, is an eclectic mix of indigenous radio and talk that broadcasts international music and talk from Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and international music from around the world. Internet radio is also a strong communicator of the indigenous viewpoint. Two popular indigenous radio stations are Internet Radio @ Buffalo Trails and American Indian Radio on Satellite. Other radio stations, including ABC Radio's Awaye! and Speaking Out, also represent the indigenous point of view.

The Youth Internet Radio Network was a research project by Hartley and colleagues that investigated streaming website with content developed for youth and by youth. Youth participated in designing the Internet site and were trained to produce the creative content for the site. Through this network and website, they were able to discuss important issues and had a platform for local information. Youth across Queensland, Australia, were contacted via this Internet radio service, which successfully used the media to establish a culturally responsive mode of communication for youth.

VIDEO

Indigenous people have exploded into the film industry over the past two decades. Prior to that time, most films were made about indigenous peoples, not by them. Today, however, many films are made with members of indigenous tribes or ethnocultural groups serving not only as consultants but as directors, producers, and actors. Although he points out that surveys do not exist regarding just how many or what kind of work is produced by indigenous peoples, Leuthold (1998) comprehensively examines films produced by American Indians such as George Burdeau (Blackfoot) and Victor Masayevsa (Hopi). Nichols (2006) studied the use of video as a communication tool for an indigenous community in Brazil, the Kayapo tribe. She suggests that the negative side of video in indigenous communities has not been well studied. Video can bring Western culture into the indigenous community, with negative effects that result from the promotion of detrimental aspects of Western culture such as consumerism and substance abuse.

MUSIC AND ART

In indigenous cultures, cultural vitality has always expressed itself through art, especially music. Music, therefore, becomes a type of cultural expression, an important medium of communication, and a significant medium in and of itself. There are many examples of the influence of indigenous music on contemporary music, and many more examples of indigenous music as a natural reflection of the cultural traditions of specific ethnocultural groups. Native Hawaiian (Kekuhi Kanahele) music is legendary, from the deep chanting of the early Native Hawaiians to the soft, mellifluous flow of contemporary Native Hawaiian music, to the synchronicity of the Caribbean

and Hawaiian music known as *jawaiian*. This form of music is very popular with Native Hawaiian youth, who have made popular icons of many Native Hawaiin musicians. Popular Native Hawaiians such as Brother Iz (Israel Kamakawiwo'ole) have made an impression on contemporary Western music.

Indigenous musical instruments are typically used in indigenous music, such as Native American flutes, Native Hawaiian gourds, and Filipino wind and percussion instruments. Native Hawaiian youth have created a resurgence in the popularity of the ukulele; in Hawaii, as well as other areas of the country, the small stringed instrument has made a comeback in elementary and secondary schools. The Grammy Awards now have a Native Hawaiian and a Native American music category. Information and musical broadcasts of indigenous youth music can be easily found on the Internet, including music from South America, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Hawaii. The field of ethnomusicology, which is devoted to studying indigenous music, is concerned with researching and documenting indigenous music from around the world and promoting an understanding of it. Internet sites such as those listed in Table 1 a focus on the music of indigenous cultures as well as broadcasting interviews and indigenous news reports

Indigenous youth have used the Internet as a forum for artful expression. The Indigenous Media Arts Group sponsored a training program in 2004 for indigenous youth to use the media as a tool for self-expression. Students in the program learned about media literacy, media arts history, scriptwriting, digital video production, print media, writing for radio and DVD, and web design in a 5-month media training program. An exhibition of their resultant media productions was displayed on the website.

THE INTERNET

January 2004 concluded the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which was launched by a proclamation of the General Assembly of the United Nations. During that decade, there was an explosion of Internet resources for indigenous peoples. Multinational, national, and local community websites were developed to serve the needs of indigenous peoples around the world, and the Association of College and Research Libraries developed a catalog of quality websites for this purpose.

The Internet has held much promise for indigenous youth. The Index of Native American Media Resources on the Internet provides a comprehensive listing of media resources on the Internet for youth and adults, including websites for newspapers, comic books, music, journals and magazines, e-zines, documentary photography exhibits, broadcasting, and other types of information. Aboriginal Connections is another excellent site for indigenous youth.

The Internet has been especially helpful in producing content for indigenous youth that would ordinarily be restricted to small, local communities. Through the Internet, such content can reach rural and metropolitan areas across the globe. The Internet magazine *Redwire* is a good example of this. It has content developed by youth and covers a variety of areas including health, wellness, news, protection of resources, and art, among many other topics. Another good example is the Aboriginal Youth Network, an online resource

Table 1 Internet Sites Dealing With Indigenous Cultures

Indigenous Peoples Music	http://ipm.typepad.com/indigenous_peoples_music/
Native Music Podcast	http://www.native-music-podcast.com/
Filipino Heritage	http://www.filipinoheritage.com/arts/phil-music/pre-colonial-indigenous-music.htm
Indigenous Music and Dance	http://www.indians.org/welker/music.htm
Turtle Island Native Network	www.turtleisland.org/culture/culture-music.htm
Filipino Heritage Indigenous Music	www.filipinoheritage.com/arts/phil-music/pre-colonial-indigenous-music2.htm

created by indigenous youth. This network sustains youth chats, streaming audio radio broadcasts, and aboriginal news from Canada, Australia, the United States, and several other global locations. This network hosts other youth Internet sites such as music (Redhiphop), magazines (*Redwire*), and political interests for youth (Environmental Youth Alliance).

—Jeannette L. Johnson

See also Computer Use, International; Digital Divide; Internet Use, International; Radio, International

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WEBSITES

Aboriginal Connections: http://www.aboriginal.connections.com

Aboriginal Youth Network: http://www.ayn.ca

American Indian Radio on Satellite: http:// airos.org/audio.html

Imparja Television: http://www.imparja.com.au

Index of Native American Media Resources on the Internet: http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAmedia.html

Indigenous Media Arts Group: http://www.imag-nation.com

Internet Radio @ Buffalo Trails: http:://native-americans.org/native-american-radio.htm

Message Stick (ABC Television): http://www.abc.net.au/message

Redwire Magazine: http://www.redwiremag.com

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES, MEDIA PREFERENCES AND

Individual differences have long been used as a tool for understanding the content preferences of media audiences. Although earlier analyses of individual differences that focused on demographic and lifestyle characteristics were linked to audience media preference, more recent research has begun to shift the focus to psychologically based personality differences. Growing evidence suggests substantial congruity between the personality characteristics evinced by children and adolescents and their preferences for and use of different types of media content.

Traditionally, individual differences based on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and race were used to build profiles of the broadcast, cable, and print media consumer. Indeed, audience data demarcated on the basis of demographic considerations remains the contemporary standard for understanding media content preferences.

Individual differences based on lifestyle and psychological characteristics—called *psychographics*—have been less strongly embraced by media professionals. Psychographics typically involve "fuzzier" concepts, such as attitudes, self-concept, and interests. Typically, psychographic information is combined with demographic data to provide a more refined image of audience media preferences.

Recent research has expanded the basic notion of psychographics to explore media preferences in terms of personality differences. In this endeavor, the broad array of habits and traits that characterize human nature are organized according to three distinct personality dimensions: extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. *Extraversion* is a quality of individuals

who exhibit high levels of sociability and positive self-esteem. The term *neuroticism* characterizes individuals who exhibit high levels of emotionality and shyness and negative self-esteem. *Psychoticism* refers to individuals who display the characteristics of egocentricism, impulsivity, and social deviance.

Within this framework, a program of research initiated by James Weaver suggests that personality characteristics exhibited by mass media consumers can influence both their perceptions of the media and their preferences for media content. Individuals of the socially outgoing, extraverted personality type, for example, strongly reject the notion of using television as a functional alternative to interpersonal companionship. At the same time, however, individuals displaying neuroticism strongly endorse the use of television as a replacement for social companionship, to pass the time, and for both relaxation and stimulation. Further, these individuals view the television remote control device as a tool that enables them to avoid commercials and emotionally disturbing program content. Interestingly, viewers of the psychotic personality type see the television remote control as a tool with which to annoy and tease coviewers.

Taken together, these findings illustrate considerable correspondence between audience members' personality characteristics and their perceptions of television. This same pattern of congruency is also evident for the television viewing habits of children. One study of a very large sample of 9-to-15-year-olds in the United States found that children who evinced personality characteristics consistent with the neurotic personality type (e.g., anxiety, depression, dissociation, anger) were exceptionally heavy viewers (more than 6 hours a day). A similar pattern was revealed in a study of 9-to-10-year-olds in Italy: Children reporting the neuroticism trait of emotional instability watched television the most (3 hours per day or more). Additionally, children reporting traits consistent with psychoticism (e.g., low levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness) were moderate television viewers, whereas those of the extraverted personality type used television the least.

Research evidence also highlights extensive concurrence between audience members' personality characteristics and their media content preferences. Individuals of the neurotic personality type, for example, express a strong preference for informative and news television content and "downbeat" music and tend to avoid lighthearted comedy and action-adventure fare. Content facilitating sociability, such as "club" or "party" music, and content promoting social activities, such as party-themed movies, are strongly preferred by individuals exhibiting extraversion. Individuals presenting the psychotic personality type showed a strong preference for socially deviant content such as graphically violent horror movies and "hard" or "rebellious" rock music videos. Research involving children, although limited, illustrates similar media content preference patterns. One study involving 12-to-14-year-olds in Spain, for instance, found that frequent viewing of popular films involving violence (e.g., *Lethal Weapon*, *Robocop*, *Rocky*) was positively associated with the extraverted personality type in girls and the psychotic personality type in boys. Although the generality of the film viewing measure makes it difficult to precisely discern the children's viewing motives, it appears that the social activity of moviegoing underlay the interest of the females, whereas males sought the vicarious experience of watching violence. Other studies show that one personality trait that defines the psychotic personality type (namely, the sensation-seeking dimension of disinhibition) is positively related to adolescents' exposure to violent television, film, video game, and website content, whereas a sensation-seeking dimension consistent with the neuroticism personality type (namely, experience seeking) is negatively linked to adolescents' violent television viewing.

Are these patterns of relationships between personality and media content preferences reliably evident across cultures? We can answer this interesting question with a qualified "Yes." Although it has long been recognized that personality characteristics are consistent across cultures, recent research highlights the fact that media content considered socially deviant is uniquely defined within each culture. This fact was demonstrated in a study comparing the movie preferences of American and German college students. High-psychoticism individuals living in the United States reported a preference for movies with sexual themes, whereas those in Germany preferred violent movies. Consideration of how sexual and violent media content is perceived within each culture helped illuminate the observed difference. In Germany, depictions of violence are prohibited, whereas media depictions of sexuality are readily available and consequently may have been considered mundane and passé by German respondents. An opposite pattern is evident in the United States: Media content involving explicit sexual themes is considered socially deviant,

whereas depictions of violence are common. Thus, the findings reveal that individuals high in psychoticism prefer media content that is deemed socially deviant within their cultures.

—James B. Weaver, III

See also Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Music, Rebelliousness and; Music Listening, Uses of; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of; Radio, Listeners' Age and Use of; Selective Exposure; Television, Motivations for Viewing of; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; Tweens, Media Preferences of

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INFANTS AND TODDLERS, DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF

Infants and toddlers under the age of 2 live in a media-saturated environment. They are fed in front of television screens, sit on adults' laps in front of computers, play with music in the background, and may even have tape recorders or computer keyboards designed for babies. However, the limited research conducted in this area has focused almost entirely on television. Some studies have addressed the impact of television on attention, language development, and learning more generally. Variables such as the kind of content viewed and the nature and extent of parental mediation appear important to an understanding of television viewing's effects on infants and toddlers.

SENSORIMOTOR EXPERIENCE

According to developmental theories, the baby-toddler passes through the sensorimotor stage during the first 2 years, in which mental schemas are shaped by the infant's senses and actions. For example, a baby may learn about the unique world of television by such actions as touching the screen when a favorite puppet appears, clapping hands to the music, or playing with the power button. These sensorimotor experiences are gradually integrated into the child's developing understanding of television and social reality. Thus, the child comes to understand that touching a puppet on a television screen feels very different from touching a favorite stuffed animal in the crib, and that, although television can be turned on and off at will, an absent caregiver does not return at the press of a button.

ATTENTION AND COMPREHENSION

Attention to television develops from birth. In describing attention, researchers distinguish between *foreground television*, or television content to which young viewers attend closely, and *background television*, which may operate as background noise in a room where the young child is engaged in other activities. Newborns of a few weeks have been observed to react to sounds coming from the television set by stopping their feeding and turning their heads toward it. During the first few months of their lives, babies

depend mostly on audio cues that direct their attention to background television for few seconds at a time. As they mature, young viewers engage in more foreground viewing, especially viewing of television programs and videotapes designed especially for younger audiences and clearly more comprehensible to them. Such programs, as well as commercials, can hold babies' attention for much longer stretches of time. Entrepreneurs have recognized this fact; consequently, there has been a recent growth in the number of programs and videotapes designed for viewing by this very, very young audience.

Particularly attractive television features are peppy music, sound effects, animation, lively pacing that is not overwhelming, laughter, and pleasing colors and shapes. Babies seem to react to content that makes sense to them: short verbal outputs, smiling faces, lovable animals, and female and children's voices. Studies of home observations of babies, as well as reports from caregivers, suggest that, from the age of a few months, babies will often stop their activities, move to the music, clap their hands, make happy gurgling sounds, and toddle toward the television set to point at objects and characters on the screen. Preference for familiar contents viewed with pleasure over and over again intensifies during the second year of life. Observations have documented high levels of attention and active viewing on the part of toddlers, which included singing and dancing along, pointing to the screen, imitating behaviors, speaking back to the television, and generally reacting enthusiastically and with great joy.

Babies and toddlers' attention to television is greatly influenced by the behaviors of people around them. For example, placing a baby on one's lap or cuddling the baby in front of the television will significantly lengthen his or her attention period. Food, too, seems to ensure longer periods of satisfied concentration—babies offered a bottle or a snack while viewing continued to be relaxed, attentive viewers.

By the end of their second year, toddlers' viewing sessions gradually lengthen, with signs of growing interest in the animation genre. Although accurate measurement of attention to television in babies and toddlers is a complicated matter, researchers claim that the amount of time spent with television grows dramatically, particularly during the second year of life. The amount of viewing varies greatly, however; some babies do not watch any television, whereas others may view 1 to 2 hours daily on a regular basis. At around 2½ years, on average, many youngsters are able and willing to stay tuned for a full half hour or even more to a program they find of interest. This age coincides with the transition into the language-oriented, preoperational stage of cognitive development, with all the physiological and social changes typical of this age group. Thus, contrary to the claim that toddlers (as well as children from older age groups) are "hypnotized" by the screen, toddlers clearly demonstrate very frequent changes in orientation from the screen to the surrounding environment and back.

VIEWING AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

A common criticism of excessive television viewing at a very young age is that it hinders the development of language, a central cognitive task for babies and toddlers. There is some research evidence to support these claims, as the quality and quantity of parent-child interactions have been found to be significantly reduced in the presence of background television. However, the distinction between background and foreground television is useful here, as other studies point to the possibility that parental mediation and viewing of age-appropriate programs may stimulate language learning. Studies have found that infants and toddlers benefit most from viewing programs that apply specific linguistic strategies appropriate for this age group, as when actors on television speak directly to child viewers, encourage their participation, engage in object naming, provide opportunities for children to respond, and the like. Watching programs that use attractive storytelling formats has also been found to be associated with positive language development.

Indeed, the few observational studies and parental viewing logs that have followed the language development of babies and toddlers in their home environments suggest that some parents use television as a "talking book" with their young ones. They practice linguistic skills during television viewing, particularly with programs aimed at the very young. For example, both children and parents may designate objects and characters on the screen by name (e.g., "Here is a balloon! This is a butterfly!"); may ask questions (e.g., "Where did they go? What is she doing?"); may repeat messages, including commercials and slogans; and may describe what they see (e.g., "He is sad" or "They are playing with the dog").

Overall, these studies suggest the importance of paying attention to program types and content in

considering the effects on language development, because the viewing of different programs may have different types of influence on language development (as well as other aspects of development).

TELEVISION VIEWING, COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, AND LEARNING

A few studies have focused on the possible relation between the significant presence of background television noise in the first few years of life and less reading and poorer cognitive development in general at an older age. In addition, a few experimental studies that examined learning from videos presented to viewers under 2 years of age were quite consistent in indicating that very little learning occurs under such conditions, and that it is dramatically less than that found for equivalent live displays of behavior. Such was the case for experimenting with learning imitation from televised behavior, for searching for hidden objects, and for learning positive versus fearful emotional reactions. Taken together, these studies suggest that learning from television by children under the age of 2 is limited and that exposure to television at this age is associated with negative outcomes. This may be explained in part by the nature of development in the sensorimotor stage and the nature of television as a symbolic, representational medium. At this age, young viewers still lack symbolic awareness and have immature cognitive skills (e.g., perceptual, linguistic, and attentive skills). The findings of these studies raise important substantive as well as methodological questions about studying very young viewers, but they are too few and far between to suggest any firm conclusions.

EARLY COMPUTER USE

Very little is known about the growing phenomenon of early computer use by infants and toddlers. One such study in the United States found a socioeconomic and racial divide in early childhood access to and use of computers and the Internet. Early computer use seems to develop in the second year of life, generally while the child is seated on a parent's lap, and through use of special keyboards designed specifically for babies. For both boys and girls raised in homes with computers, computer-related skills develop rapidly during the third year of life, but to date there is no research-based knowledge about the nature of this process.

PARENTAL MEDIATION

Parental mediation is a central variable in all aspects of young children's media-related behaviors—in controlling the amount and type of exposure to media, interacting with children about such contents, reinforcing certain behaviors, and the like. More specifically, children who are raised in homes with viewing-time rules (i.e., rules about the amount of viewing time) tend to spend less time in front of the screen. However, this was not the case for children raised in homes that applied program rules (i.e., rules about the type of programs viewed), where parents were more likely to hold positive attitudes toward television and to mediate viewing itself. Finally, viewing rules develop as children grow older and were found to be associated with higher socioeconomic status.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS' RECOMMENDATION

Since its inception, the television market for the very young has grown significantly, raising new questions about television and very early childhood. This trend was inspired by a highly controversial recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1999 that discouraged all forms of television viewing before the age of 2. Based upon very limited research evidence, the assumptions behind this recommendation were that television viewing hinders physical, emotional, and cognitive development because young viewers are for the most part passive and are bombarded with too much audiovisual stimulation, and because viewing television takes time away from social interactions with adults and children alike. However, the limited number of existing studies to date cumulatively suggest that the impact of television on development is determined not by viewing television in and of itself but by the type of program content, the amount of viewing, the viewing circumstances, the alternatives available to the youngster, and the form of parental mediation that occurs in conjunction with viewing.

—Dafna Lemish

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Infants and Toddlers, Media Exposure of; Preschoolers, Media Impact on Developmental Needs of

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INFANTS AND TODDLERS, MEDIA EXPOSURE OF

Since the 1990s, there has been a large increase in age-appropriate programming for infants and young children as well as a recent increase in television exposure during infancy. The effects of background television exposure on play, and the fact that infants learn less from television than from live demonstrations, limit what infants can gain from television exposure. On the other hand, the fact that repeated exposure to televised segments enhances imitative and language learning, as well as evidence of the beneficial effects of television on older children, suggest that television has the potential to provide positive and cost-effective benefits during infancy and early development. At present, the long-term effects of early media exposure on social and cognitive development are largely unknown. Researchers are examining how specific kinds of exposure to commercial programming influence early development and what kinds of experiences help young children understand and decode the symbolic nature of screen media.

MEDIA EXPOSURE

American children are born into and develop in a world in which media pervade their daily experiences. A recent nationwide survey, conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, of 1,000 homes with children aged 0 to 6 years found that that 99% of homes contain a television set, 95% have a DVD player or a VCR, 50% have three or more televisions, 73% have a computer, and about a third of U.S. children have televisions in their bedrooms.

Media content for infants and young children is also changing and has been accompanied by an increase in children's television exposure. During the 1970s, children were first exposed to television on a regular basis at approximately 2.5 years. During the 1990s, television programs such as *Teletubbies* and videos and DVDs such as *Baby Einstein* started to be produced specifically for infants. This has shifted the age of regular exposure. The Kaiser study reported that many infants begin consistently viewing videos and DVDs at 6 to 9 months; 74% are exposed to television before age 2, and those exposed spend approximately 2 hours per day with screen media, predominantly television, videos, and DVDs. Computer experience and video game play are relatively rare prior to age 2 but increase in frequency during the early preschool years. By contrast, these children spend only about 40 minutes a day reading books or being read to. Furthermore, 72% of parents in the Kaiser study believed that early exposure to computers was "mostly helpful," and 58% believed that early exposure to educational television programming was "very important." Patterns of television use differ across ethnicity; African American and Latina/o children spend more time watching than Caucasian children.

Finally, availability influences levels of television exposure. When children have televisions in their own rooms, they are exposed to a greater amount of television. In a household where there is heavy television viewing, defined as having the television on most or all of the time, children have higher levels of television exposure; they begin watching at an earlier age, are more likely to watch television every day, and watch it for longer periods of time. Children in heavy television-viewing households are also significantly less likely to be read to every day (59% versus 68%). Conversely, in households with strict rules regarding television exposure, children watch less television and spend more time reading.

Partly in response to this change in the media landscape, the American Academy of Pediatrics (1999) recommended that parents not expose children under the age of 2 to any type of screen media and that they limit screen time to 1 to 2 hours per day for all screen media, including computers, for children over the age

of 2. This recommendation was based on two major concerns. First, numerous studies had shown negative effects of media aggression on preschoolers' behavior, and it was predicted that such effects would also occur when exposure occurred at a younger age. Second, time spent with screen media may displace other activities that are more important for children's development, such as face-to-face time with parents and caregivers. The finding that being read to occurred less in heavy-television households is consistent with this hypothesis.

ATTENTION AND LEARNING

Attention

Anderson and his colleagues have examined the development of attention to television during early childhood. Children's visual attention to television increases as a function of age. In observational studies, 1-year-olds begin to attend to the television, and by 2.5 years of age children sit facing the television set and glance at it more frequently and for longer durations. A number of salient formal features consistently increase toddlers' and preschoolers' attention to television. Attention to televised content increases and remains high in the presence of female adults, character action, children, puppets, animation, active movement (including dancing and repetition), singing and lively music, peculiar voices, and sound effects. It decreases when the length of a segment increases, during low action, and during periods of adult narration or abstract adult dialogue. Increased attention in the presence of a salient effect has also been associated with increased comprehension of the media content by young children. Other forms of attention, such as online verbal and nonverbal imitative behavior, pointing, and verbalizations, have also been associated with increased comprehension.

Imitation

Historically, researchers chose imitation to investigate the potential impact of television exposure because it provided a direct measure of knowledge transfer in an ecologically valid manner. Successful completion of the imitation task from a videotaped model requires participants to form a memory of the event on television and to transfer that memory to 3-D objects in the real world. In Albert Bandura's classic studies, 3-to 5-year-old children watched as an adult modeled a number of novel, aggressive acts using an inflatable Bobo doll. Children who were exposed to the televised adult model exhibited high levels of aggressive behavior toward the doll when they were allowed to play with it immediately after the demonstration. Furthermore, children were as likely to imitate aggressive acts modeled on television as they were to imitate such acts when they were modeled live.

More recently, the ability of preverbal and early-verbal infants to learn from televised presentations has also been examined using imitation studies. Initial studies have shown that 14-to-15-month-olds can imitate limited actions demonstrated by videotaped models. A videotaped demonstration has also been shown to be an effective reminder for 18 months for events they learned 10 weeks earlier.

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF TELEVISION EXPOSURE

Infants and toddlers are currently being exposed to relatively high levels of television, and the long-term impact of such exposure is currently not known. Although parents are being told to avoid exposing their infants to screen media, they may also feel pressures to ensure that their children are media literate.

Possible Benefits

The Effect of Repetition on Learning From Television

Infants often see material repeatedly because of television programming content and video technology. Parents report that preschoolers frequently ask to view the same program repeatedly. Furthermore, with repeated presentations of the same television program, preschoolers' attention is maintained, while comprehension increases until it finally reaches a ceiling. When televised demonstrations are repeated, even infants as young as 6 months can imitate simple actions from television. Furthermore, vocabulary gains from television viewing were seen in a longitudinal study when infants repeatedly viewed *Sesame Street* videos or DVDs but were not seen when they viewed television programs. These findings have important applied implications for television programmers. For this reason, programs such as *Blue's Clues* are aired multiple times per week.

Language Development, Learning, and Academic Success

There are beneficial effects of screen media for children as young as age 2. For example, exposure to high-quality children's educational programs such as *Sesame Street* and *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* during the preschool years have enhanced cognitive development, language development, and prosocial skills, and they have a long-lasting, positive impact on school readiness and academic performance.

Possible Risks

Infants may be at risk from exposure to television because they are often exposed to content that is designed for an older audience, or *background television*. Very young children overtly attend to *foreground programming* because it is designed for their age group and often includes some educational content. In contrast, background TV programming is not created for children, and its content is incomprehensible to them. Most infant and toddler exposure to media comes when other family members are using media.

Effects on Play and Family Interaction

Exposure to background television interrupts the duration of play bouts in 1-year-olds. Furthermore, during background television exposure, parents and caregivers attend to television content and reduce their interactions with children. Therefore, background television may interfere with learning on two fronts: by decreasing parent-child interaction and also by disrupting focus on play via incidental sound effects that attract infants' attention to television and away from ongoing play for short periods of time. Reorienting to play is difficult, and it is more difficult because there is not parental support to do so. Quality of play is disrupted by background television and is another example of displacement that occurs with media exposure.

Attention Problems

Heavy exposure to background television has also been associated with subsequent attention problems. Christakis and colleagues asked parents to report how many hours the television was on per day when children were 1 and 3 years old. When children were 7 years old, parents completed a seven-item attention problem index. In households with heavy television use, parents reported that 7-year-olds had higher scores on the attention problems index. The study included a large sample and controlled for multiple potential risk factors, including differences in socioeconomic status, maternal risk factors such as maternal depression, and child risk factors such as prematurity or prenatal drug exposure. However, there were limitations to the study. Although is it possible that early TV viewing causes later attention disorders, it is also possible that children with attention disorders are motivated to watch more television or are encouraged to do so by parents who find it difficult to cope with high levels of hyperactivity or poor attention.

The Video Deficit Effect

The term *video deficit effect* refers to the finding from multiple paradigms—including imitation tasks, object search tasks, emotion processing tasks, and verbal comprehension tasks—that, prior to age 3, children have difficulty transferring what they view on screen to real life and consistently learn less from television than from a live demonstration.

—Rachel Barr

See also Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Educational Television, Effects of; Infants and Toddlers, Developmental Needs of; Media Exposure

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INFORMATION PROCESSING, ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE MODELS OF

Although we may believe that we do the majority of our information processing—from watching ads and television shows to shopping and voting—in a very active, rational way, numerous *dual-process* models and theories developed in the fields of communication, marketing, and social psychology demonstrate how we often take in and use information passively, perhaps even without our awareness. Developmental psychologists have recently demonstrated that this can be especially true of children and adolescents, suggesting that mass media may subtly but profoundly persuade them and that they are more likely than adults to judge and act without considering the consequences. Due to personal differences and depending on the situation, we are sometimes prone to simply “absorbing” new information that we may use in making judgments and decisions—even if we are unwilling or unable to express our reasons for believing or behaving as we do.

Active and passive models, including those of impression formation, persuasion, judgment, and decision making, represent the purest forms in dual-processing theories. Early in their history, dating back to the mid-1970s, the active and passive thinking modes were seen as distinct types—that is, it was assumed that at times we do either one or the other. However, more modern versions define them as continuum endpoints, suggesting we usually perform *mixed processing*—some combination of the two. However, most theories are still somewhat vague in explaining how the processes co-occur.

Various theories examine different dual-processing categories, and debate about the models persists among researchers—for example, between proponents of the elaboration likelihood and heuristic-systematic models. As theories of persuasion, these involve the ways in which we receive information from media—gaining knowledge and forming attitudes and opinions—but other theories describe the ways we use the information we get in making decisions. Nevertheless, all such theories argue that there are at least two routes (and, by definition, not just one) by which we receive and use information. Although most theories describe both an active process and a passive one, there is generally at least an underlying assumption that the two opposites represent ends of a continuum and that we often use “mixed processes,” or a combination of the two routes. All the theories also agree on the criteria that determine whether we will process (more) actively or passively: *motivation* and *opportunity.*

Motivation refers to our desire to think carefully, based on whether we imagine something is important or not, and we can be motivated from within or by our environment. For instance, children may be motivated to come up with a good reason for their parents to buy them the toy they want, either because they like it or because “all the other kids have it.” *Opportunity* includes mental and physical resources. Due to “limited cognitive capacity”—meaning that most of us can actively think about seven plus or minus two pieces of information at a time—we sometimes become “loaded down” and unable to think about important things. We may also find ourselves “strapped for time” and unable to actively read or make a decision. Dual-process theories suggest that we actively process only when we have ample motivation and opportunity: as “cognitive misers,” without the ambition or resources to process actively, we default to passivity.

Given the enormous amount of information we encounter in daily life, many argue that most of our processing is done rather passively, especially among children. Potential negative consequences of such passive information consumption and use include stereotyping, prejudice, and increased consumerism, and passive processing may also help explain how media violence makes hostility seem normal. However, such subtle persuasion has also been shown to have potential benefits, such as creating stronger anti-drug attitudes among youth.

—Carson B Wagner

See also Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Cognitive Development, Media and; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and

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INFORMATION PROCESSING, DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND

Children and adolescents use a variety of media, including computers and the Internet, video games, print media, movies, videotapes and DVDs, music, and television. Even as the media landscape expands, television has maintained its place as the most commonly used medium and is the focus of most studies of information processing of media and developmental differences in these processes. Three general areas are of particular interest: attention to television, comprehension of and memory for televised material, and long-term learning of educational content.

ATTENTION

Popular conceptions of television viewing often characterize children as "zombies" staring fixedly at the television, but naturalistic and laboratory studies of how children watch television typically contradict this stereotype. Instead, infants, children, and adults all show similar patterns of looking at and away from television; most looks are very short (less than 3 seconds), with only occasional extended looks at the television. This consistent pattern does not mean that attention is unchanging across development. The percentage of time children spend looking at television at home or in the laboratory increases steadily from infancy through middle school, finally leveling off during adolescence. Children typically divide attention between television and other activities, with increases in percentage of attention to television largely due to more time spent in longer looks by older viewers. In turn, such long looks appear to enable greater engagement and deeper processing of content, as viewers are less distractible and remember more content presented during long looks.

What drives these patterns of attention? The very youngest viewers, infants and toddlers, are exposed mainly to television not designed for them. They may process little content but primarily react to the changing sights and sounds of television. By as early as 1 1/2 to 2 years of age, however, children begin to respond more systematically to features that are not merely salient but signal content that children are likely to find relevant or entertaining. For example, the presence of children's voices, peculiar voices, sound effects, animation, and puppets cue children to the child relevance of the content. Across the preschool years, children's ongoing comprehension increasingly influences their attention. If children make sense of a program and judge it to be "for them," they are more likely to sustain attention than if the program seems confusing or adult oriented.

COMPREHENSION AND MEMORY

There has been little assessment of comprehension of and memory for television and video in infants and toddlers, with most studies focusing on imitation of simple action sequences and retrieval of objects from locations illustrated on video. In general, very young children learn less when guided by video than they do from live displays, although children's performance improves with repeated viewing. Even for preschoolers and young elementary school children, it often is asserted that children make little sense of most programs because they are poor at selecting important events, connecting events, and inferring causes of events. However, preschool children are able to understand relatively

complex stories if plots hinge on concrete action sequences, if dialogue and action are well integrated, and if story events relate to children's experiences.

To comprehend a televised story, one must understand information that is conveyed by production techniques. For example, a viewer must infer that a shot of a house's exterior followed by a shot of characters seated in a living room conveys the location of the characters within the house. Young children are capable of making such inferences if they concern simple relations in time and space. A second requirement for effective comprehension is appreciating that not all story events are equally important to the plot. Some of the most important events are those that can be connected as causes or consequences of other events. Diverging from claims that young children are unselective and insensitive to such connections, events with many connections are remembered best as early as the preschool years.

There is, of course, considerable development in comprehension skills during middle childhood and adolescence. Not until later in elementary school do children become consistent in understanding complex production techniques (e.g., flashbacks) and characters' emotions, intentions, and motivations. Older children and teens also become more skilled at connecting groups of events to an overall theme. With age, children add to their stores of world knowledge and so become capable of appreciating a wider variety of situations. Similar patterns of development of comprehension skills are observed for stories presented via different media.

LEARNING FROM EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

The research on children's comprehension and memory for television is predictive of conditions for learning from educational television. Until recently, little educational television has been directed to children under 2 years of age. Several studies focusing on overall levels of infants' and toddlers' television exposure suggest negative effects on cognitive development, but limited evidence suggests that viewing of specific programs contributes positively to very young children's vocabulary development. For preschoolers, more extensive evidence indicates that television programs with clear curricular goals that are informed by research on young children's attention and comprehension (e.g., *Sesame Street*, *Blue's Clues*, and *Dora the Explorer*) produce both short-term and long-term positive impact on school readiness, vocabulary development, literacy, problem solving, and flexible thinking. For older children, one of the challenges to successful educational programming is the need for a compelling narrative structure to maintain children's interest while keeping educational content centrally linked to the narrative. Shalom Fisch has proposed that the limited capacity of working memory constrains the amount and depth of processing that can occur simultaneously for narrative and educational content. According to this model, if resources allocated to narrative processing diminish those available for processing of educational content, educational goals are unlikely to be met. Conversely, to the extent that educational content is integrated with the causal structure of the narrative, the more likely the educational content is to receive deeper processing. With development, increases in speed of processing, world knowledge, story schemas, inferencing abilities, and knowledge of television conventions enable older children to benefit from programming that incorporates complex goals.

—Elizabeth P. Lorch

See also Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); Cognitive Development, Media and; Developmental Differences, Media and; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of

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INSTANT MESSAGING

Instant messaging, also known as IM, is an instantaneous textual communication technology that is free to anyone who has an Internet account and is able to download it. Primarily offered through large Internet service providers and computer conglomerates such as AOL, Microsoft, Yahoo, and Google, the instant messaging tool appears on a computer monitor looking like a box with a list of log-in names (a "buddy list") and an indication of whether the person who uses the log-in is online and available to chat at the moment. Often, adolescents will hold several conversations with several different people at the same time.

With Internet usage growing steadily among the general population, adolescents in particular have seized upon the medium to play games, conduct research for homework, download music, shop, read news, and especially to socialize with other teens, both close friends and strangers, often controlling and managing an entire social world in doing so. Nearly nine out of ten American teens are now online, and 72% do so primarily to use instant messaging. The AOL/DMS study confirms that, if teens had to choose to give up one thing in their lives forever, 25% said they would miss instant messaging or emailing with friends and family the most.

Children and adolescents who use instant messaging often appear to employ a language of their own when conversing with one another. These may include simple abbreviations (*gtg* for "got to go," *brb* for "be right back") but also include playfulness with the language (holding down keys for emphasis, as in "pleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeease!"), reliance on visuals and multimedia (inserting photos of actresses, links to fun websites, or audio clips into their conversations) and often with adolescents, profanity (general swearing but also abbreviations such as *wtf* for "what the f—"). Adults who read IM conversations between children and adolescents often complain that they need a glossary to understand them, which, according to some teens and tweens, is the point. They view instant messaging as a space where they can carry on conversations and experiment with adult tones without parents and teachers actually hearing them.

Past computer-mediated communication research indicates that adults often "play" with identity, sometimes taking on a different gender or a more fantastical nature. However, most research on children and adolescents in instant messaging demonstrates that users often maintain an identity consistent with their real-world identities. Although they experimented with different tones, voices, and subject content among the different persons with whom they communicated, they generally adhered to a consistent presentation of self to acquaintances.

Online identity construction and negotiation appear to be major considerations in this communication process among adolescents. Negotiation is often located directly through the discourse of online communication—specifically, through language use, social networking, and power negotiation among peers, as well as general surveillance of the social online landscape. Identity may be articulated in various ways within instant messaging, including through the choice of a log-in name (such as sexysexygrrl or vball22) and the way users describe themselves in their public profile that is associated with their log-in names, but it also is constructed through the words and symbols users type and insert in any conversation. Often, instant messaging is a space where aggression is easy to act out without consequence—for example, bullying classmates or

fighting with others with a barrage of mean messages, swearing—so an adolescent may construct him- or herself as tougher than in real life. It is also a space in which many experiment with sexuality, from small acts of flirting to planning and discussing actual sexual encounters with others. Sexual harassment also has found another venue within instant messaging. And even though those using IM are doing so without the trappings of a body and the preconceived notions of gender, patriarchal discourses that often pigeonhole boys into conversing in ways that they perceive as masculine and girls into taking on feminized roles in the conversation still seep into the online landscape.

Furthermore, because instant messaging is deployed by large corporations and conglomerates, it is not a commercial-free environment. AIM (from AOL) launches a screen with a few of the day's headlines and links to AOL's advertorial each time a user logs in to its IM system; both AIM and MSN Messenger (Microsoft's IM system) place rotating banner advertisements within their IM boxes. Furthermore, companies have developed "bots"—artificial intelligence-powered computer programs that appear to chat with users as if they were live human beings—that users may add to their buddy lists, and they may converse with these bots about specific products that are often youth oriented.

Instant messaging blurs the public and private spheres in ways that were not possible with traditional communication. While users converse in one-on-one dialogue with each other most of the time (it is also possible to use a chat room or to converse with three or four people in the same window at once, but it is less common), they may carry on many one-on-one conversations at once. Furthermore, younger IM users often copy and paste pieces of a one-on-one conversation into conversations with others; sometimes this acts as a means of validation ("did he really say that about me?" "yes— here's what he just wrote:") or a means of spreading rumors or passing along humorous conversations. Sometimes, these pasted pieces of conversations are passed among members of an entire peer group or even among all students in an entire school, which makes IM a space where mass communication is easily possible and where privacy is truly an illusion.

—*Shayla Thiel*

See also Chat Rooms; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use, Socialization and; Email; Email Pen Pals; Interactive Media; Interactivity; Internet Bulletin Boards; Internet Relay Chat (IRC)

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INTERACTIVE MEDIA

One of the most important assets of the media environment that children and adolescents face today is the mass availability of interactive media. Driven by advances in computer technology, a variety of communication tools and platforms have emerged that allow users to manipulate the content and form of communication (within certain limitations) and to participate actively in using the media product. Thus, interactive media offer greater freedom and more variability, flexibility, control, and influence in communication choices and behavior than conventional noninteractive, "linear" media. Nevertheless, use of linear media has always been personalized and somewhat interactive. For instance, readers of a newspaper can choose which articles they want to read, and VCR owners can fast-forward or rewind a movie to break up its linear structure. The new feature of interactive media is the opportunity for each user to construct and

modify media content and form actively, in both mass and interpersonal communication. This entry examines the values and the risks associated with the interactivity of three prominent media of today: the Internet, video games, and mobile phones.

THE INTERNET

One may think of the Internet as the most important interactive medium in the Western world and Asia. Although it is not a medium in itself, the Internet unifies various tools for mass and interpersonal communication. The World Wide Web (WWW) is the most relevant mode of interactive mass communication. Through the WWW, users can actively select information from an abundance of sources and establish their own personal communication platforms (home pages). Moreover, WWW users interactively can publish, search for, and receive digitized media products, such as music files, movies, and pictures. The WWW also allows many users to generate media content collaboratively, for instance, in online lexica such as *Wikipedia*.

The Internet also offers various systems for computer-mediated interpersonal (one-to-one and one-to-many) communication. Email and chat rooms mirror traditional communication modes (handwritten letters and personal conversation, respectively), and instant messaging services allow users to set up whole peer groups online for continuous exchange. Each of these interactive tools offers certain advantages for communication (e.g., availability, speed, convenience), but each also involves specific limitations (e.g., a lack of nonverbal cues that could prevent misunderstandings).

VIDEO GAMES

Also referred to as *computer games*, *electronic games*, or *digital games*, video games represent the most sophisticated interactive media technology available for home markets today. Video games exploit computing technology to create entertainment experiences. A game simulates a specific "world" and assigns to players a certain role within this world, for instance, the role of wizard, soldier, or household head (e.g., *The Sims*). Interactivity allows for participation in and co-creation of the game world, for instance, by exploration, competition, construction, or object collection. A narrative framework integrates players' actions into a story plot and adds to the overwhelming appeal that video games have for many (primarily male) children and adolescents.

MOBILE PHONES

The third important interactive medium available to adolescents (and, to an increasing degree, children as well) is the mobile phone. Mobile phones have become adolescents' favorite channel of conversation, especially in Europe. Equipped with additional devices such as cameras, organizers, music players, and video game applications, modern cellular phones serve as personal "life managers" that offer multimedia communication and entertainment. The most important feature of cell phones that explains their tremendous popularity among young users has always been, however, SMS (short message service). With SMS, a brief message is input into a cell phone and transmitted to (at least) one other person's cell phone. Without requiring both conversation partners to be available synchronously, SMS connects users ubiquitously, discreetly, and—given most users' remarkable command of an SMS-specific language with many abbreviations—efficiently.

THE VALUE OF INTERACTIVE MEDIA TO ADOLESCENTS

The features commonly referred to as *interactivity* have boosted the mass distribution of various new media technologies, especially among children and adolescents. A developmental perspective would attribute the success of interactive media to the observation that interactive media serve various needs that are highly salient for young people.

One such need is play or entertainment. Interactive video games create fascinating, exciting, and manifold experiences of play and enjoyment. The creation, maintenance, and actualization of peer relations is another important need, especially in adolescence. Interactive media such as SMS fulfill this requirement conveniently and effectively. For another example, online dating services are controllable (i.e., anonymous and "secure") ways to "meet" new potential partners and free users from the pressure of self-disclosure and other uncomfortable experiences that come along with face-to-face dating. Therefore, interactive media powerfully assist adolescents in maintaining existing and establishing new social relationships.

The development of interpersonal identity is an important part of young people's experience and

relates to their needs for play and for relationship management. By using interactive media, adolescents can experiment with different social roles, try out alternative social behaviors, and get feedback about them. Online communities such as chat rooms are excellent stages for such identity play and allow young users to learn about themselves.

THE RISKS OF INTERACTIVE MEDIA

The mere capacity of interactive media to help children and adolescents fulfill certain needs does not mean that interactive media are necessarily valuable and positive factors in young people's development. Heavy reliance on Internet-based communication (as opposed to face-to-face conversation) may impose the risk of social exclusion, harmful social experiences, deprivation of social-experiential diversity, and other potentially problematic consequences. Similar concerns have been raised with respect to massive video game exposure (e.g., increase of aggression, risk of childhood obesity).

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that interactive media will keep and even expand their dominant role in children and adolescents' media environment. Young people display remarkable energy and speed in adapting to interactive media, and they quickly learn how to utilize these media for their needs. The numerous advantages interactive media have to offer, however, may also imply serious dangers to positive development, specifically when young users consider these media a full replacement for, rather than a useful complement of, conventional media of interpersonal networking and entertainment.

—Christoph Klimmt and Peter Vorderer

See also Aggression, Electronic Games and; Chat Rooms, Social and Linguistic Processes in; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use, Socialization and; Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; Email; Human-Computer Interaction (HCI); Instant Messaging; Interactivity; Internet Use, Psychological Effects of; Internet Use, Social; Media Entertainment; Mobile Telephones; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Webcams; Websites, Children's

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INTERACTIVITY

The media environment in which children and young people are now participating has become increasingly characterized by interactivity. *Interactivity* refers to the condition of communication in which simultaneous and continuous exchange occurs, and which involves some form of media or information and communication technology. Interactivity is an attribute of face-to-face conversation, but in relation to media it is often associated with new media, which increasingly blur the distinction between users and producers. In contrast, more established technologies are based on a one-way, mass and noninteractive communication.

Sally J. McMillan distinguishes between three types of interactivity: interaction between users, interaction between users and documents, and interaction between users and systems. The last is a variety of human-machine interfaces, for example, search engines, conversational computer programs, and computer games.

THE PROMISE OF INTERACTIVITY

The interactivity of the new media has been often regarded as potentially empowering for children, as democratizing, and as challenging centralized control. Interactivity enables greater command of the communication process by allowing users to modify the form and content of a mediated environment in real time. For instance, many children's television programs use input from the viewers, and they encourage kids to create content and send it by media such as email or instant messaging.

Because of their interactive character, new media are often seen as more democratic than the hierarchical media that preceded them. The new media enable children and young people to become cultural producers in their own right and so to evade the control of their parents. By interacting with other users (for example, through online chat), with documents (for example, with hypertext), or systems (for example, in virtual games) children can play roles that they are not allowed in real life. As surveys have shown, children and teens use the Internet to look for information, and they interact in online forums about health topics that perhaps are difficult to talk about, such as drug use, sexual health, or depression.

Interactive multimedia liberate their users from the constraints of more traditional linear media such as film and television. They abolish the distinction between reader and writer, consumer and producer. Writers such as Douglas Rushkoff and Don Tapscott claim that the interactivity of the new media empowers young people in that they can refuse to buy into the role of the passive viewer who obeys linear programming such as television. These writers regard interactive media forms as increasing consumer choice for young audiences and as offering them new means of learning.

There is great optimism about the potential of interactivity for schooling and education. Studies show that the introduction of interactive media into the curriculum can potentially enhance collaboration and cooperation, responsibility, satisfaction, learning and mastery, knowledge and understanding of the world, language development, motivation to engage in an activity, and sociability.

THE LIMITATIONS AND DANGERS OF INTERACTIVITY

As David Buckingham observes, enthusiasts' arguments offer a powerful challenge to the common stigmatization of young people as "dupes" who passively consume all-powerful media. However, despite the appeal and potential benefits for children and adolescents, interactivity has crucial limitations and may not always have positive outcomes.

First, the safety of children and young people using interactive media such as the Internet is far less easy to secure. Its use is more difficult to control and supervise than use of the noninteractive media. Although the interactivity of the new media enables children to exert more influence on the content and form of the communication, they are more open to dangers beyond their control. For example, incidents of adult sex offenders meeting children in interactive online forums and gaining their trust are increasing in both the United Kingdom and the United States.

Second, enthusiasm about the democratizing potential of interactive media might be also tempered by data on increasing surveillance of consumer behavior and of young people's use of new media in particular. There is growing unease over the use of interactivity by online advertisers, particularly with regard to unfair or deceptive practices that target children and teenagers and may violate children's rights and privacy.

Third, that children interact with numbers of sources does not necessarily mean that they enjoy greater diversity and freedom of choice. The increasing commodification and convergence of the media in general and the Web in particular (for example, the growing control of the Internet and child-related online sites by large corporations such as TimeWarner and Disney) constitute a real threat to the promise of children's participation in an interactive, truly diverse and multicultural media environment.

In the context of schooling and education, Buckingham notes that the positive aspects of interactivity should be tempered by declining state investment, growing involvement of commercial corporations in educational interactive software, and increasing pressure on parents to compensate for the failings of public education. Furthermore, studies have shown that interactive software introduced into schools often fails to meet the promise of greater control by the learner.

Lastly, users may perceive a communication setting as interactive and affording opportunities to participate even though they may not have control over, or reciprocity with, the sender or system. Many texts that describe themselves as interactive offer a rather conventional, fixed, and very limited repertoire of possibilities. It is also important to remember that,

currently, the creative, educational, and communicative benefits of interactivity in new media such as the Internet, educational software, and computer games, are realized by only a small elite.

On a more general note, Erik P. Bucy notes that the underlying assumption of most interactivity research is that two-way communication is categorically desirable and associated with positive outcomes. It would be useful to question this assumption and examine it empirically in relation to children's and young people's experiences of media, as well as those of adults.

—Shani Orgad

See also Chat Rooms; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use in Schools; Digital Literacy; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; Email; Human-Computer Interaction (HCI); Internet Bulletin Boards; Internet Use, Education and; Internet Use, Positive Effects of; Online Media, Agency and; Online Relationships; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Virtual Reality; Webcams

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INTERNATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND MEDIA

In discussions during the 1990s, a number of researchers and activists around the world called attention to the importance of establishing an international center for knowledge of children and media, with special emphasis on media violence. UNESCO and the Swedish government showed particular interest in carrying the question further. In 1997, Nordicom (the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research) at Göteborg University in Sweden was asked to take responsibility for the establishment of the UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen. The work of the Clearinghouse has increasingly focused on communicating scientific knowledge about young people and the media from a variety of perspectives, and in 2002 the center's name was changed to the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth, and Media.

The aim of the Clearinghouse is to increase awareness and knowledge about young people and media, thereby providing a basis for relevant policy making, contributing to a constructive public debate, and enhancing young people's media literacy and media competence. Moreover, it is hoped that the Clearinghouse's work will stimulate further research on children, youth, and media.

The Clearinghouse is a knowledge center for various groups of users around the world, including researchers, policymakers, media professionals, voluntary organizations, teachers, students, and interested individuals. A central idea behind the Clearinghouse's activities is the establishment of an active global network. Interest in the network has continuously increased, and today there are 900 participantsrepresenting a number of different users. More than 125 countries from all continents are represented in the network.

Books, reports, and a newsletter are published by the Clearinghouse. One of the most important tasks is the publication of a yearbook. The yearbooks contain articles focusing on one or two current themes and written by qualified scholars from different regions of the world. These themes included media violence, media education and literacy, young people's participation in the media, video and computer games, pornography and sex in the media, media globalization, media regulations, soap operas and reality television, democracy, and public service. The learinghouse also regularly releases a newsletter, which contains brief articles, news items, presentation of new literature, recent conferences, and more. The newsletter, which is available on the group's website, has 2,000 subscribers in 150 countries.

The Clearinghouse's website contains information on publications, current and archived newsletters in full, a literature database on media violence, and a database on relevant institutions and networks in the world, as well as international declarations and

resolutions concerning young people and media. Moreover, information about international coming events is continuously added to the home page. Another resource is a special themes database, which makes it possible to locate articles from Clearinghouse publications classified by specific themes.

From the start, organizers of international and regional events addressing young people and media have asked the Clearinghouse for formal and informal advice before and during such programs. These groups include UNESCO, UNICEF, the European Union, the World Summits on Media for Children and Adolescents, the International Association for Media and Communication Research, the International Center of Films for Children and Young People, the Children's Broadcasting Foundation in Africa, the International Forum on Children and Media, and the Asian Media and Communication Centre.

The activities of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth, and Media are financed by the Swedish government and UNESCO.

—*Ulla Carlsson*

See also Media Education, International; Media Education Foundation

WEBSITE

International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth, and Media: http://www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse.php

INTERNET BLOCKING

Children's use of the Internet confronts parents with two broad issues of control. One has to do with the content youngsters bring into the house purposefully or accidentally through their online connections. The other involves sensitive information children might reveal about themselves and their families when they respond knowingly or unknowingly to online questions. With youngsters across a gamut of ages using the Internet, many U.S. parents find themselves with conflicting attitudes. They recognize the technology's benefits for their children, but they worry about the violent, sexual, or stereotypical depictions to which Internet predators may expose their children, and they are concerned about unscrupulous actors who may try to obtain information regarding their children and families. Parents can respond to these concerns through nontechnological means such as rules for computer use and by using technologies such as monitoring programs and Internet filters.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Both the issue of objectionable content and the concern with sharing personal information raise questions about privacy. The extent to which these issues are contentious varies across societies as well as within them. In the United States, legislative, business, and advocacy groups have accepted the importance of considering the nature of incoming and outgoing material when children make up the online audience. They broadly agree that two key privacy rights are involved. The first involves the right to be left alone—that children should not be bothered by potentially exploitative material—and the second asserts the right to control one's personal information. Nevertheless, legislative, business, and advocacy groups do not always agree on what incoming or outgoing material is unacceptable for what age of children, how it should be blocked, or who should take responsibility for blocking it.

Digital interactive technologies are increasingly playing a central role in the lives of children and young people in the United States. A Kaiser Family Foundation study found that, in 2004, 74% of children aged 8 to 18 were living in homes with available Internet access, compared to only 47% of children in 1999 (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005). The Pew Internet & American Life Project found that, in 2004, approximately 11 million teens (aged 12 to 17) went online daily, compared to about 7 million in the year 2000 (Lenhart, 2005).

A 1999 nationwide survey conducted by Turow of parental attitudes toward the Web noted the tension between the potential value of the Internet and the dangers it can present for child users. The survey found that 70% of parents with computers in the home said that the Internet is a place for children to discover "fascinating, useful things," and nearly 60% said that children who did not have Internet access were disadvantaged compared to their peers who did. At the same time, more than 75% of parents expressed concern that their children might give out personal information and view sexually explicit images on the Internet. Subsequent studies note that parents' conflicted vision of the Web for their children continues. Many of these hopes and fears reflect a desire to

properly calibrate the permeable boundaries between the family and the world outside it, particularly when it comes to the protection and socialization of children.

STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN

Nontechnological Approaches

Web experts and children's advocates suggest technological and nontechnological strategies parents can use to protect their children when they go online. Nontechnological strategies that aim to "block" undesirable incoming and outgoing activities include placing the computer in a public location in the home (not in the child's bedroom), implementing rules regarding usage, discussing appropriate usage with child, and checking up on what their child is doing and where they are visiting online. Technological strategies for blocking involve filtering and monitoring of the children's Internet use.

Monitoring Technology

Monitoring technology involves software programs that track, secretly or openly, where child users go on the Internet and what they do when they get there. This technology does not provide parents with a way to determine whether objectionable material was sought out or was accidentally discovered. Those who despise the idea of monitors argue that is a repugnant form of eavesdropping. Those who advocate the practice argue that parents have a right to review what their children do online. In particular, they say, making youngsters aware they are being monitored is akin to having a parent standing behind them and will encourage Internet activities that mesh with their family's values. Moreover, they say, monitors allow for a fuller use of the Internet than filters do.

Internet Filters

Filters allow Internet users to view certain content while blocking other online content. A filter can come in the form of a software program that is purchased and installed on a computer. It may be offered from the user's Internet service provider (ISP), or parents can pay to have their Internet access routed through a filtering company. Filters can be customized by their users in different ways. Some filters use a "blacklist" of website addresses that are inaccessible to the users; others create a more restrictive "whitelist" of website addresses that may be visited and block access to all others. Additionally, some filters scan websites for objectionable content in the form of text and images. Finally, some filters work with website rating systems to determine what websites are and are not appropriate.

Many parental advisors have advocated the use of filters, and the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires libraries or schools that want government discounts for Internet access to place filters on the Internet computers used by children. Naysayers point out, however, that filters may work against useful child exploration. For example, gay and lesbian advocates contend that filters typically make it impossible for youths concerned about their sexuality to find websites expressing similar feelings, from which they can then learn. Those who dislike filters also note that they may inadvertently eliminate parts of the Web that may be useful or informative to children in connection with their schoolwork. The word *breasts*, for example, may launch the filtering of sites that could discuss important aspects of breast cancer, breast reconstruction, or even teen angst about breast size. Advocates of filters counter that technology is improving, with more sophisticated filters that look for words or phrases in certain contexts. For example, a filter would allow the word *breast* when preceded by *chicken* or followed by *cancer*.

Most large Internet service providers offer filters for parents who want to use them, yet nearly half of all parents (46%) acknowledge that they do not implement this technology (Lenhart, 2005). Recent data suggest that filter implementation is related to parental Internet use. Specifically, only 38% of parents who do not go on the Internet themselves say they filter Internet access for their children, compared with 56% of online parents (Lenhart, 2005). Many parents with basic computer and Internet skills often do not feel comfortable using filters (Turow, 1999), which possibly explains the discrepancy between Internet and non-Internet-using parents. The difficulty of implementing blocking technology is compounded for parents of adolescents because adolescents are often able to find ways to circumvent the limits placed upon them, including simply going to a friend's home where the technology does not exist. This expectation that teens will circumvent the system may help explain why 49% of families with older teen users aged 15 to 17 report using filters compared with 60% of families with younger teen users aged 12 to 14 (Lenhart, 2005).

Just as blocking objectionable online material using technologies comes with an age continuum, so are nontechnological approaches age related. Research shows that parents implement these practices much more with younger children than with older teen users of the Internet. For example, according to a study by Amanda Lenhart (2005), 75% of families with children aged 12 to 14 report having have rules regarding Internet use, compared to 55% of families with children aged 15 to 17. Further, 70% of parents of children aged 12 to 14 say they have followed up on their child's Internet behavior, compared with only 55% of parents of teens aged 15 to 17.

THE CHILDREN'S ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT

When it comes to blocking youngsters from sending sensitive personal information out of the home, the federal government has joined in through the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which went into effect in April 2000. The act was developed as a result of parents' concerns that their children may give up information that would identify them to strangers on the Internet. It applies to the online collection of personal information from children under the age of 13 and clearly details what a website operator must include in the privacy policy, when and how to seek consent from a parent, and what responsibilities the operator has to protect children's privacy and safety online (U.S. Federal Trade Commission, 1999). Early research showed that websites required to follow COPPA often "did not live up to the spirit and sometimes even the letter behind the rules" (Turow, 2001, p. 2). In recent years, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (2002) has found better compliance.

Perhaps as important as compliance with COPPA is the act's definition of the ages at which children are considered vulnerable online. As the result of political pressures from marketers, COPPA clearly identifies children under the age of 13 as those needing protection and forgoes any discussion of older teen users. Parents' tendency to use technological and nontechnological blocking parallels this age distinction. These findings are ironic when one considers that, the older children get, the more time they spend online, the more skilled they become at using the Internet, and the more opportunities and risks they experience. In fact, around 60% of parents in two national surveys reported by Turow and Nir (2000) and Turow (2003) said they are more concerned that teenagers, rather than children under 13, may disclose personal information to a website.

POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE

The era of digital interactive technology has only just begun. The notion of a discrete "Web" in the home is likely to blur as interactive digital television, radio, Internet, cell phones, video games, and print materials become common via broadband. Arguments about and uses of these new forms need to be tracked and benchmarked. Academics should engage in cross-cultural research that explores different definitions of and social arguments about media privacy in different societies. One key goal should be to explore the best mix of governmental, industrial, parental, and child-based strategies for addressing concerns about digital interactive technologies that youngsters use during the 21st century.

—Jessica L. Taylor and Joseph Turow

See also Chat Rooms; Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Computer Use, Age Differences in; Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Age and; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of

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INTERNET BULLETIN BOARDS

Bulletin boards or message boards (including precursor technologies such as Usenet) are online spaces where Internet users can gather and discuss topics of mutual interest. Bulletin boards are sometimes grouped with chat rooms; however, chat room conversations take place in real time and tend not to be stored, so chat room discussions tend to be more social and less informational than conversations on bulletin boards. Because an increasing number of websites, from shopping sites to photo-sharing sites and personal home pages, include the opportunity for visitors to comment, the boundaries of what should be considered a bulletin board have begun to blur, and studies of the bulletin board as a separate "genre" are declining.

The variety of subject matter discussed on Internet bulletin boards is almost limitless, and the potential harms and benefits for young people are similarly diverse. Bulletin boards have been praised as a way to allow young people to participate politically with greater equality and as a way for them to overcome shyness and share experiences. They have also been noted as a means to "de-stigmatize" membership in groups with marginalized identities, which can be seen as good or bad depending on whether one believes that the identity in question *should* be marginalized.

USAGE

In 2004, a large-scale survey in the United Kingdom of 12-to-19-year-old regular Internet users found that 17% contributed to bulletin boards, whereas a Pew survey conducted in the United States in 2000 found that 38% of 12-to-17-year-olds go to websites and bulletin boards to express their opinions. Little is known about how these young people might differ from young online users who do not use bulletin boards, although the UK study did find that young people who posted messages on bulletin boards were more likely to be middle class and older than those who did not. Statistics on participation in bulletin boards overall are not readily available and can be hard to compare, as surveys of Internet use now tend to ask about site use by subject (e.g., "Have you visited sites about health?") rather than by site type (asking whether the user has visited "static" informational sites about health vs. bulletin boards on health). What constitutes use is also problematic, as some studies focus on active participation (i.e., people who post messages to bulletin boards), whereas a large proportion of bulletin board users rarely or never post messages themselves.

It seems likely that young people visit bulletin boards that relate both to broad interest categories available to everyone (sports, cars, etc.) and to traditional youth interests (e.g., music). It is possible that, because young people are still experimenting with and coming to terms with their identities, they may be disproportionately interested in bulletin boards that discuss issues that are difficult to raise face-to-face.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF BULLETIN BOARD USE

Self-Disclosure and Health

A number of medical researchers and social scientists have suggested that participation in online bulletin boards where the chronically ill can share their experiences can help sufferers cope more effectively with their diseases, both through information sharing and through the provision of emotional support.

Political Participation

E-democracy advocates were among the early researchers of bulletin board use. Because many bulletin boards permitted anonymous or pseudonymous participation in political discussions that spanned the globe, it was thought they could help to enable more equal participation by geographically dispersed groups and, crucially, by people of low social status (young people among them) who might be intimidated by face-to-face gatherings. Bulletin boards for political consultation have been discussed as ways to combat the widely perceived problem of disengagement from conventional politics among young people. However, subsequent research suggests that, although young people who are already politically active are using online tools for political discussion, new online forums do not appear to have attracted large numbers of new entrants to "conventional" (i.e., party) politics among the young. Moreover, it has been suggested that rules for online conduct designed to keep children safe—telling them not to reveal personal information about themselves, for example, and telling them not to talk to strangers online—tend to discourage online participation in political dialogue.

CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING BULLETIN BOARD USE

Identity De-Marginalization

Because bulletin boards make it easy for people with unusual or socially stigmatized identities to find each other and discuss their identities—without the embarrassment of face-to-face contact, and often isolated from critical voices—it has been argued that this particular Internet form may sustain and encourage those marginal identities. The Pew survey in 2000 revealed that 18% of online Americans aged 12 to 17 use the Internet to get information about something that is hard to talk about with other people (although this statistic covers a wide variety of online practices, from web page browsing to emailing and chat room use as well as bulletin board use).

Some academics have been quick to praise the support this can provide for groups such as gays and lesbians, but researchers say the same mechanism may be at work in encouraging white supremacists. More recently, media attention has focused on bulletin boards by and for people with eating disorders or those considering self-harm and suicide. It has been argued that these bulletin boards can legitimize and enable those forms of deviance.

Policing

Bulletin boards, like chat rooms, have been portrayed as places where children may face unwanted sexual advances. Studies provide little evidence that this fear is justified, however; a large-scale study of online sexual crimes in the United States suggests that fewer than 5% of sex offenders found their victims through bulletin boards. The relatively public nature of bulletin boards, and the fact that messages once posted normally remain viewable for days afterward, may tend to dissuade potential offenders. Commercial bulletin boards are often policed by paid or volunteer moderators who are on the lookout for antisocial behavior.

—David Brake

See also Internet Use, Social; Media Education, Political Socialization and; Personal Web Pages; Regulation, Internet

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INTERNET CONTENT RATING ASSOCIATION (ICRA)

The Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA) is an international nonprofit organization with offices in the United States and the United Kingdom. Its mission is to help users find the content they want and can trust, and to filter out what they do not want for themselves or for their children. ICRA also acts as a forum through which both policy and technical infrastructure are defined to help shape the way that the Web and content distribution channels work.

ICRA has created a unique content description vocabulary that allows Web masters and digital content creators to self-label their content in categories such as nudity, sex, language, violence, other potentially harmful material, and chat. There are context variables such as art, medicine, and news. Thus, a piece of content or a site can be described as having depictions of nudes but in an artistic context. As content creators check the elements in the questionnaire that are present or absent from their websites, a small file is automatically generated using the RDF format, which is then linked to the content on one or more domains.

Users, especially parents of young children, can then use filtering software such as ICRAplus to allow or disallow various types of content. A key point is that ICRA does not rate Internet content; the content providers self-label, and then parents and other concerned adults decide what is or is not appropriate for themselves or their children. ICRA makes no value judgments about sites.

The descriptive vocabulary was drawn up by an international panel and designed to be as neutral and objective as possible. It was revised in 2005 to enable easier application to a wide range of digital content, not just websites.

New developments coming onstream include Quatro, a project funded by the European Union, which will integrate content labels with quality and trust marks. ICRA also intends to launch a service to verify the accuracy of ICRA labels and to provide this information to third-party tools and services, such as search engines.

ICRA's corporate members include AOL, British Telecom, Microsoft, T-Online, and Verizon. ICRA has been supported by the European Union's Internet Action Plan and various trusts and foundations. Through the Associate Membership scheme, individuals can join and support the work of the organization.

—Stephen Balkam

See also Internet Blocking; Regulation, Internet

WEBSITES

Childnet International: www.childnet-int.org
GetNetWise: www.getnetwise.org
ICRA website: www.icra.org
Insafe: www.saferInternet.org
NetMom: www.netmom.org
Safer Internet Action Plan: http://europa.eu.int/safer Internet

INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY, EFFECTS OF

Ever since the emergence of the Internet as a mass medium, scholars in several disciplines have examined the social, psychological, and policy implications of the new medium in diverse content areas. One such area that has attracted an undue degree of attention is pornography. However, although the published research pertaining to pornography in traditional media (e.g., print, television) is voluminous, research on Internet pornography is still in its early stages. Scholarship on the singularity of Internet pornography is meager, and although there has been widespread concern about the probable negative effects of exposure to Internet pornography, there is little experimental evidence to document such potentially negative effects.

Several underlying characteristics of the Internet render both presentation of and exposure to pornography uniquely different in Web-based environments, compared to traditional media venues. First, interactivity (a key attribute of the Web) offers greater control to users in terms of how pornographic materials can be sampled, thus allowing increased customization in online users' consumption of pornography. Second, the multimedia capability of the Web makes it possible to manipulate and disseminate pornographic materials in a variety of different modalities (e.g., text, graphics, video). In fact, some statistics suggest that the multimedia feature is one of the most important features contributing to distribution of pornography as one of the most popular uses of the

Internet. Third, the navigational aspect of the Web raises concerns about how users negotiate Internet pornography. That is, designers of pornographic websites adopt especially unscrupulous strategies and make it very difficult for users to close a browser window when exposed—willingly or unwillingly—to a pornographic website. Such difficulties in navigation could frustrate users and lead them to have negative perceptions of navigational efficiency. Finally, from the user's perspective, the relative anonymity afforded by the Web implies that even otherwise-private individuals can partake of pornography, as it can be easily accessed.

The issue of Internet pornography is especially a concern with adolescents, given that 90% or more of youth in the 12-to-18-year-old range have regular access to the Internet. Scholars have voiced concern that such enhanced access could lead youngsters to seek out sexual materials on the Internet and could have deleterious consequences on adolescent sexual development. Data available from the Youth Internet Safety Survey of 1,501 adolescents in the 10-to-17-year age range suggest that approximately 90% of youth who have reported seeking online pornographic materials are over the age of 14 years, and also that online seekers, as compared to offline seekers, are substantially more prone to feelings of depression or emotional disconnectedness. In addition, 25% of youth reported that they had been inadvertently exposed to online pornography, and a quarter of this segment reported feeling upset upon such exposure, raising concerns that even accidental exposure to Internet pornography can be detrimental to adolescent psychosocial development. In fact, these survey findings are consistent with some experimental results with college-aged youth that suggest that unwanted exposure to Internet pornography can lead users to overestimate the prevalence of Internet pornography and can also lead them to become gloomy and depressed.

Surprisingly, despite the huge debate surrounding the effects of Internet pornography, the amount of published empirical research does not reflect the degree of attention that this topic has attracted. The few studies that have experimentally examined effects of Internet pornography have dealt with adult users. One possible reason for the lack of a protracted stream of experimental research could be the ethical ramifications of exposing adolescents to graphic and explicit sexual materials on the Internet. However, given the large body of findings in traditional media effects research that has examined perceptual differences between exposure to erotic imagery and dehumanizing pornography, one experimental study by Mahood, Kalyanaraman, and Sundar (2000) examined whether college students' perceptions of Internet pornography were contingent not only on the type of pornography (erotica, dehumanizing) but also on the degree of website interactivity (low, medium, high). The findings from this study suggest that participants held less sexual conservatism after exposure to dehumanizing pornography, compared to erotica. Moreover, the interactivity variable also appeared to exert pronounced psychological effects because, irrespective of type of pornographic content, participants exposed to materials with a moderate degree of interactivity expressed the most sex role satisfaction. Finally, an interaction effect revealed that exposure to dehumanizing pornography with medium and high levels of interactivity led to increased acceptance of violence toward women, whereas highly interactive erotica led to less acceptance of violence toward women.

Clearly, given the tremendous public policy implications of the findings thus far, a systematic and nuanced program of research examining the psychosocial effects of exposure to Internet pornography needs to be undertaken.

—Sriram Kalyanaraman

See also Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Interactivity; Pornography, Internet; Pornography, U.S. Public Policy on; Regulation, Internet; Sex, Internet Solicitation of

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INTERNET RATING SYSTEMS

Over the past decade, parents groups, the government, and the Internet industry have grappled with the issue of protecting children from inappropriate Web content while still preserving the free speech rights of website authors. Many advocate active parental guidance and Internet self-regulation over government intervention. One organization supporting self-regulation over government legislation is the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA). An international nonprofit organization based in the United Kingdom, ICRA's goal is to create a safer Internet while preserving the free speech rights of those on the Web.

Under its content rating system, ICRA does not rate websites but rather provides a vocabulary for website authors to rate their own content. To rate a website, an author completes a questionnaire that addresses each of ICRA's six broad vocabulary categories: nudity, sexual content, violence, language, user-generated content, and other harmful content. Once a questionnaire is completed, the website author is provided with a content label to electronically attach to the website. The label does not appear on the website but rather is embedded in the site's HTML code, where it can easily be read by a web browser or Internet filtering program.

Parents then employ a Web browser or Internet filter to read the content labels. ICRA provides a free Internet filter, although many Web browsers can also read and filter ICRA's content labels. Using the same vocabulary categories provided to website authors, parents select labels for content they will and will not allow their children to view. Once set, a filter or Web browser blocks websites that do not contain the acceptable content labels.

Financially supported by corporate members and by grants from the European Union, ICRA offers its rating service to website authors and parents for free. In 2005, ICRA reported that approximately 100,000 websites had been labeled, including Microsoft, Yahoo, and AOL. Alternatives to ICRA include Safe Surf, another rating system, as well as Internet filter services like CyberPatrol and NetNanny, which compile lists of blocked websites.

The practice of Internet content rating has drawn some criticism. Critics fear that content rating systems may be used to censor controversial speech. They also argue that organizations may not be able to meet the demands of self-rating their websites. If a website does not contain a ratings label, its content could be filtered out simply for being unrated. Others question the ability of Web authors to effectively rate their own content. Finally, the overall effectiveness of ICRA has been questioned due to the slow adoption rate of content labels by website authors.

—Charlene Simmons

See also Internet Blocking; Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA); Internet Pornography, Effects of; Regulation, Internet

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INTERNET RELAY CHAT (IRC)

The partners communicating in computer-mediated chat, or online chat (one type of computer-mediated communication) are separated geographically but make simultaneous use of the same chat service. Each person engaged in chat types messages in rapid alternation, and the chat program shows the successive contributions on the computer screen. The result is written conversations between two people or among a group. Internet Relay Chat (IRC) is a relatively little-known chat method compared to online chat services such as instant messaging and chat rooms (webchat). IRC is complex, with strong traditions. For that

reason, it tends to be used exclusively by computer-literate people and is less well known to the general public. As IRC conversations are easy to log (in contrast to web chats), IRC seems to be the best-researched online chat technology.

IRC SERVERS, CLIENTS, NETWORKS, AND CHANNELS

IRC was developed by Jarkko Oikarinen, a Finnish student, in 1988. Its basis is a server-client architecture, with a program (client) that enables the user to connect to a network of IRC servers. To use the service, it is necessary to install an IRC client on one's own computer and connect to an IRC server. Sets of IRC servers are grouped into IRC networks. The four largest IRC networks internationally are QuakeNet, IRCnet, EFnet and Undernet; each of them manages dozens of servers and tens of thousands of simultaneous users. The best information on downloading and using IRC clients is to be found on the Internet (for instance, at www.irchelp.org). Net addresses of IRC servers can also be found online.

Once logged on to an IRC server, one can access a wide range of IRC channels, which function as virtual meeting points for chat groups. Channel names usually begin with the # symbol. Although most of the IRC channels are used for casual chatting (off-topic channels), others (on-topic channels) are devoted to specific subjects, such as computer issues (#linux), music (#eminem), hobbies (#snowboarding), countries (#hungary), religions (#hindu), sexual preferences (#lesbians), or age groups (#teens). The website www.searchirc.com monitors and classifies IRC channels of numerous IRC networks. Every IRC user has the right to open new IRC channels. On entering the channel of choice, one sees the chatters present listed by their nicknames. The text of the conversation is scrolled in the chat window, and the user can join in by typing his or her contributions. Besides the public conversations, it is possible to enter into a private conversation with an individual chatter.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF IRC USE

Chat comments are usually confined to one or two lines on the screen and must be typed fast to keep up the flow of conversation. Because of this, typing errors and abbreviations are frequent. To give chat conversations emotional or even theatrical content, chatters add so called "sound and action words" and emoticons, such as *sigh* or LOL (laughing out loud). IRC's emoting function can be used to describe nonverbal or other behaviors. Thus chatters are able to smile at each other symbolically ("/me smiles at you"), hand each other cups of coffee, kiss via the computer, or even have "cybersex." In many IRC channels, the virtual interactions are often less inhibited and less censored than behavior that takes place in face-to-face situations in the real world. One danger in online chatting lies in the invisibility of the other chatters; one can be easily deceived about their identities. Pathological or criminal motivation finds particularly clear expression under the anonymous conditions of the online chat room (for example, adults with abusive intentions may claim to be adolescents looking for other adolescents). Unpleasant chat encounters are a likely outcome, and the deceit is particularly dangerous when chat acquaintance upgrades to telephone calls or even offline meetings.

Exchanging files is another special feature of IRC. Chatters can swap photographs of themselves, music files, computer programs, video clips, and so on. IRC channels are used by some as a means of exchanging pirated copies or child pornography. Illegal activities within IRC are interrupted and prosecuted by official bodies. For the rest, rules of chat etiquette ("chatiquette") are drawn up by those operating IRC servers and networks (IRC operators) and by the moderators of the various channels (channel operators). These rules are reinforced by sanctions.

Children and adolescents can visit and use existing IRC channels in their spare time. In the classroom, IRC channels are sometimes employed—perhaps to perform a play, to learn a language, or to conduct discussions with experts. The channels have a political impact when they carry eyewitness reports from places at war or in crisis. It is possible for the users of IRC to volunteer to support IRC networks and channels, helping to maintain the technology and nurture the culture of the IRC community.

—Nicola Döring

See also Chat Rooms; Chat Rooms, Social and Linguistic Processes in; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Education and; Internet Use, Social; Webcams

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INTERNET USE, ADDICTION TO

There has been an increasing amount of research into excessive use of the Internet, although very few of these studies specifically concern children and adolescents. This increase is coupled with a growing movement that views a number of behaviors as potentially addictive—including ones that do not involve the ingestion of chemical substances. Recent research has suggested that social pathologies are beginning to surface in cyberspace. These pathologies have been termed *technological addictions* by Mark Griffiths and have been operationally defined as nonchemical (behavioral) addictions that involve excessive human-machine interaction. Kimberly Young claims that *Internet addiction* is a broad term covering a wide variety of behaviors and impulse control problems, which are categorized according to five specific subtypes:

1. *Cybersexual addiction:* Compulsive use of adult websites for cybersex and cyberporn
2. *Cyber-relationship addiction:* Overinvolvement in online relationships
3. *Net compulsions:* Obsessive online gambling, shopping, or day-trading
4. *Information overload:* Compulsive Web surfing or database searches
5. *Computer addiction:* Obsessive computer game playing (e.g., *Doom, Myst, Solitaire,* etc.)

Griffiths has argued that many of these excessive users are not Internet addicts but merely use the Internet excessively as a medium to fuel other addictions. Put very simply, adult gambling addicts or adolescent computer game addicts who engage in their chosen behavior online are not addicted to the Internet. The Internet is just the place where they engage in the behavior. However, in contrast to this, there are case study reports of individuals who appear to be addicted to the Internet itself. These are usually people who use Internet chat rooms or engage in fantasy role-playing games—activities in which they would not take part except on the Internet itself. Griffiths's case studies did include teenagers, although his small sample was self-selected. These individuals, to some extent, are engaged in text-based virtual realities and take on other social personas and social identities as a way of making themselves feel good.

Case study accounts of both adults and adolescents (e.g., Griffiths, 2000a; Young, 1996) have shown that the Internet can be used to counteract other deficiencies in the person's life (e.g., relationship problems, lack of friends, issues related to physical appearance, disability, or coping skills). Internet addiction appears to be a bona fide problem for a small minority of people, but evidence suggests the problem is so small that few people take it seriously. Furthermore, there is very little evidence to suggest that more than a handful of children and adolescents are affected by excessive Internet use.

—Mark D. Griffiths

See also Computer Use, Rates of; Electronic Games, Addiction to; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of; Internet Use, Social.

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INTERNET USE, AGE AND

By the beginning of the 21st century, Internet use had become an established part of the media landscape for young people in many parts of the world. In 2005, an estimated 77 million persons under the age of 18 were online. Whereas English remains the dominant language on the Internet, and the vast majority of young people in North America and the United Kingdom have Internet access, the Asia Pacific region (especially India and China) has experienced the largest growth in Internet use among young people in recent years, followed by an increase in the number of young users in European, Scandinavian, South American, African, and Middle Eastern countries. Most access to the Internet remains disproportionately in the hands of the wealthiest citizens of each of the world's countries, and at this relatively early stage in the life of the Internet, the bulk of the research on young people online has been conducted in the English-speaking countries of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. (Research on mobile media, including Internet access through cell phones, has been especially strong in Scandinavian and Asian countries, however). This entry relies heavily upon research reports about Internet use in regions where it is most common.

The United States has the highest percentage of its young people on the Internet, and they spend the most time online. Young people in the United States spend an average of 48 minutes each day online, although older teens spend more time online than younger children. About a third of young people aged 8 to 18 have created their own website or web page. The most common ways in which young people have engaged in Internet use, however, include (1) playing online games (8 in 10 U.S. teens online play games online); (2) instant messaging with friends (75% of U.S. teens online use IM, and one third of all U.S. teens use IM every day); and (3) downloading music (half of all U.S. teens online have downloaded music) or (4) accessing websites about movies, television shows, music, or sports. Teens also get news online, shop online, and retrieve health information online. Still, 13% of young people in the United States do not use the Internet. Young people from lower-income families and those from African American families are the least likely to be online.

Whereas most young people over the age of 8 have used the Internet to conduct research for a school assignment, more than a quarter admit that they have used it in less approved ways, such as pretending to be someone older to gain access to a site or copying something from the Internet and turning it in as their own work. Additionally, 60% of 13-to-16-year-old girls in the United States and almost half of 9-to-19-year-olds surveyed in the United Kingdom admitted to giving out personal information to someone they had met online.

By 2005, almost all U.S. and U.K. young people aged 8 to 18 had accessed the Internet from their schools. While three quarters of all young people had Internet access in their home, only about a third had high-speed access. Research has found that young people in the United States and the United Kingdom are more likely than their counterparts in other parts of the world to have their Internet use monitored. About one quarter of all U.S. teens online have rules about restricted time on the computer, and about a quarter access the Internet through some kind of filter. Almost 20% of 8-to-18-year-olds in the United States an the United Kingdom had Internet access in their bedrooms, however—a marked increase over the previous 6 years, according to a study conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation in the United States. This same study found that young people in the United States are increasingly taking the Internet with them outside the home: 13% of 8-to-18-year-olds had a handheld device with Internet access.

The junior high years seem to be the time in a young person's life when Internet access becomes a regular part of weekly (or daily) life. According to the Pew Internet & American Life project, whereas 60% of 6th graders in the United States report that they have been online, that figure jumps to 82% for 7th graders and continues to climb every year, topping out at 98% in 11th and 12th grades. Seventh grade also seems to mark the turning point in parental monitoring practices: By the age of 12, most children are free to log on to the Internet with little or no parental supervision.

The use of instant messaging (IM) has remained a popular option among younger teens since its introduction in 1997 with AIM (AOL Instant Messaging). IM and text messaging as well as emailing have

contributed both to the evolution of the current young generation's linguistic expressions and to new social practices such as writing "away" messages when one is offline and developing or ending romantic relationships online. As the use of mobile devices has increased, however, young people in the United States and the United Kingdom have voiced a change in preference that echoes their Asian and Scandinavian counterparts: Although IM and email are still a part of their lives, most prefer to use the mobile phone for communications with their friends. They maintain communication with friends through IM (and email, to a lesser extent) when they are at home and in front of the computer doing homework.

By the time young people reach their teen years, they report that they believe that the Internet helps them with their relationships and their own forms of self-expression as well as with their homework. More than half (57%) of all teens 12 to 17 have created content for the Internet, including 22% who have created their own websites and 19% who maintain an online journal or blog (compared with 7% of adults who maintain a blog). Whereas only 27% of online adults report that they regularly read blogs, 38% of online teens do. Older teenage girls are the most likely to blog, and those who are online frequently are more likely to blog than those who are not.

Although they seem to relish the opportunities of the online environment, young people do see the online environment as one that has risks. More than half of young people online in the United Kingdom have come into contact with pornography, and most of them (38%) have come upon it unintentionally. Additionally, one third of U.K. young people aged 9 to 19 reported that they had received unwanted sexual comments online or by text message. The same survey found that parents drastically underestimate children's negative online experiences. This may be because young people underreport such occurrences out of fear that their parents will further restrict their Internet use.

As the Internet matures into a regular part of everyday life for many people, several issues related to the online environment continue to confound young people and their parents as well as those who educate or market to them. Young people who give out their personal information online are increasingly targeted for identity theft and child trafficking or abuse. Young people are also reporting cases of cyberbullying and invasions of privacy in increasing numbers. Teachers at the high school and university levels find themselves pressed to establish policies about the use of laptops and handheld devices in classrooms, as checking email and text messages or surfing the Web on these devices can lead young people to pay less attention in class and can be disruptive for other students. There are also legal issues on the horizon, such as the case of the prospective Harvard University students who hacked into Harvard's site to see if they had been granted admission, and the burgeoning number of lawsuits filed on behalf of the music industry to discourage illegal downloading. As mobile devices become more prevalent, however, young people will be able to multitask with ever greater efficiency, further securing the place of the Internet in their everyday lives.

—Lynn Schofield Clark

See also Computer Use, Rates of; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of; Media Exposure

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INTERNET USE, EDUCATION AND

In recent years, the Internet has influenced the K–12 educational system in a number of informal and formal ways. Teachers and students increasingly

"VERB™ It's What You Do" is a national, multicultural, social marketing campaign coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The VERB campaign encourages young people between the ages of 9 and 13 (tweens) to be physically active every day. The campaign combines paid advertising, marketing strategies, and partnership efforts to reach the distinct audiences of tweens and adults who influence them. The VERB website offers a variety of resources and information designed to promote physical activity among tweens. Brochures, articles, activity kits, posters, and stickers can be ordered from the VERB website at www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign.

utilize the Internet to communicate with one another, to research and prepare classroom assignments, and to schedule extracurricular activities, as well as for a variety of other purposes. Schools have used the Internet for online instruction for both regular and nontraditional students, as well as for other purposes that include school administration and teacher training. Government funding plays a role in making the Internet accessible, especially for less-advantaged schools and students. Although there are some questions about the pedagogical effectiveness of the Internet, many educators and scholars agree that Internet use in education is indispensable in the context of an emerging knowledge economy. A familiarity with computers and the Internet is essential for tomorrow's information workers, and such training in schools is a vital input into individual empowerment and national competitiveness.

DEFINING ACCESS

Internet access can be differentiated according to the location of use. Children and adolescents access the Internet principally from home and school; other popular options are friends' homes, public libraries, and community centers. In 2005, nearly all American public schools and 93% of classrooms had Internet access; in comparison, three out of four American homes were connected to the Internet. Despite the greater prevalence of Internet access in schools, surveys show that children and adolescents are more likely to access the Internet from home.

We can also distinguish between different types of Internet access based on the means of delivery, speed, and quality of connectivity. Low-speed dial-up connections permit only a restricted set of services to be made available to users: e-mail, bulletin boards, and web browsing, for example. High-speed digital subscriber loops (DSL) and cable modems provide access to additional, high-bandwidth services such as peer-to-peer file sharing, instant messaging, and streaming audio and video. Thus, the type of connection affects the range of services that children and adolescents can access over the Internet. In 2005, the vast majority of schools had broadband connectivity, and a significant number also have wi-fi networks available on school premises. In comparison, approximately half the households with Internet access are estimated to have broadband connectivity today.

Despite dramatic growth in Internet penetration in recent years, a "digital divide" still exists, principally along the dimensions of poverty and race. Children in poor families were less likely to have computer and Internet access at home. Similarly, poor school districts were likely to have fewer computers per 100 students, and fewer classrooms wired for Internet access. Racial minorities, especially African Americans, were also less likely to have Internet access at home, even after controlling for income and education. In 2005, about 13% of teenagers did not access the Internet from any location.

USING THE INTERNET

Children and adolescents with Internet access reported using it for a variety of purposes, with schoolwork figuring among the top. In Pew Foundation surveys, children reported using the Internet to find information for school reports, to communicate with classmates and teachers about assignments and projects, to create websites for curricular and extracurricular activities, to research college and career choices, and as a "virtual backpack" to store school-related material. Game playing, instant messaging (IM) and email were by far the most popular applications; students used IM extensively to work on school projects as well as to keep in touch with friends and to coordinate social activities.

Paralleling the popularity of the Internet among children and adolescents, schools and other agencies have also adopted the Internet in educational delivery systems. In 2003, the latest year for which data are available, nearly 9 out of 10 schools with Internet access had a school website, which was used to communicate information to parents and students. School districts, universities, foundations, government agencies, and nonprofit consortia have also deployed a variety of online educational materials, especially organizations offering enrichment programs, math and science education, and language instruction. Many agencies have worked on developing "best practices" and benchmark criteria for online instruction. For example, a Benton Foundation report highlighted several programs that help teachers integrate computers and Internet use into curricula, including Chicago's Technology Infusion Planning program and Cleveland's Alliance+ program. An enormous amount of material is available online to provide teachers with training, lesson plans, and classroom ideas. Supporters claim that the Internet can play an important role in augmenting instruction for disadvantaged school districts in inner cities and rural areas, and for subjects for which qualified teachers are difficult to find, such as math, science, and English as a Second Language (ESL).

FUNDING SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY

The federal government has allocated significant sums for promoting Internet access in schools. The E-rate, or "education rate," program is part of a set of universal service initiatives mandated by Congress in the 1996 Telecommunications Act. These initiatives were intended to bridge the gaps in telecommunications, technology, and Internet access between rich and poor communities in the United States. The act provides up to $2.25 billion annually in discounts for technology and telecommunications access to schools and libraries, with contributions coming from the telecommunications industry. Because the discount available to each school is based on the number of students in each school who are eligible for the school lunch program, it has benefited the most economically disadvantaged states and school districts. Currently, a nonprofit organization called the Universal Service Administration Company implements the E-rate program through its Schools and Libraries Division. Several other educational technology programs are coordinated by the U.S. Department of Education, among them the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund, the Technology Innovation Challenge Grants, and the Star Schools program.

THE EFFICACY OF INTERNET-BASED INSTRUCTION

These efforts to promote school Internet access are based on the assumption that the Internet can have a beneficial effect on educational quality and equality. A number of studies have found that classroom Internet access has a positive impact on student motivation, attention, and involvement, eventually leading to measurable learning effects. Internet access also permits the deployment of new pedagogical tools that allow self-paced learning, encourage higher-order thinking, and empower students to become not just consumers but producers of information.

However, other studies found no such effect, which researchers attribute to the fact that Internet use has not been effectively integrated into the curriculum. For example, one classroom observer found that the Internet was used only tangentially for instruction—time on the computer was used as a reward for good behavior or to play games or browse the Internet. Surveys also report that, although most teachers use the Internet in the classroom, only a much smaller number utilize model lesson plans or other structured instructional material available online. Although the authors of these studies and surveys support Internet access in the classroom, they argue that it can be effective in education only with greater emphasis on teacher training, curriculum development, and integration into the educational process. A common complaint raised by many teachers in this context is that decisions about Internet deployment are usually made

by school districts and administrators who often have no clear idea how it will be utilized in the classroom.

The criticisms noted above come from observers who agree that Internet access in schools is a fundamentally sound and progressive idea—the problem is only with the implementation. More radical critics argue that the emphasis on Internet access is actually counterproductive and that the enormous expenditure in wiring up schools and classrooms to the Internet may be a wasteful and unnecessary diversion of resources that are much needed elsewhere in the educational system, for example, to reduce class sizes, to hire better-qualified teachers, to improve buildings, to provide art and music education. In this view, Internet access does not further any of the fundamental aims of education such as reading, writing, or mathematical ability but creates a false and misleading sense of progress.

OTHER ISSUES

Other practical difficulties exist in integrating Internet access into schools. An especially vexing issue is monitoring students' use of the Internet and screening inappropriate content. Schools, libraries, and others who provide Internet access to children are required under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) of 1999 to adopt Internet safety measures, which include the installation of filtering software that blocks inappropriate content. Although CIPA has withstood court challenges that it violates the First Amendment, other problems remain with the software: Human overseers still must decide which classes of material will be deemed inappropriate; further, software solutions can sometimes block access to legitimate sites and are open to circumvention by computer-savvy children. At the same time, physical safeguards, such as account approvals from school administrators or supervision in computer clusters, are imperfect solutions and may have the unintended consequence of inhibiting Internet use.

School network administrators may also need to guard against other forms of inappropriate use. Music downloading is a popular activity among children and adolescents and carries with it the possibility of copyright infringement. Although the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) of 1998 has limited the liability of Internet access providers for copyright infringement, network providers are still required to take immediate steps to remove infringing material on being notified by copyright owners, and to identify copyright violators when requested to do so by a court. Cyberplagiarism, or copying from the Internet, is another problem rampant in schools, enabled by Internet access. A Pew Foundation survey found that nearly one in three students reported that "too many" students cheat using online content. One in five teens complained of breaches of privacy resulting from Internet use. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) that took effect in April 2000 aims to guard against this by requiring parental consent before personal information can be collected from children under 13 years. Rare instances of the use of school Internet accounts to send threatening emails and for racial and sexual harassment and cyberstalking have also been reported.

—Krishna Jayakar

See also Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Computer Use, Age Differences in; Computer Use in Schools; Digital Divide; Digital Literacy; Internet Use, Age and; Peer Groups, File Sharing Among; Websites, Children's

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Pew Foundation. (2005). Pew Internet & American Life Project. Washington, DC: Pew Foundation. Available at http://www.pewInternet.org/. Several surveys conducted under the Pew Internet & American Life Project provide information on how children and adolescents use the Internet.

INTERNET USE, GAMBLING IN

Gambling is a popular recreational activity among adolescents, and the Internet represents an easily available medium for such activity. Adolescent males are especially vulnerable to the dangers presented by Internet gambling. The limited data appear to suggest that individuals who are actually addicted to the Internet itself are not those people who experience other addictions (such as gambling) online. However, for the social gambler, the Internet may be more addictive because of factors such as convenience, event frequency, asocial nature, and anonymity of online gambling. Clearly this is an area of concern that must be addressed sooner rather than later, given the increase in Internet gambling globally.

EXTENT OF ADOLESCENT GAMBLING

Adolescent gambling is a growing problem and is related to other delinquent behaviors. For example, in the United Kingdom, 10% to 20% of adolescents engage in weekly gambling, despite that fact it is illegal for children and adolescents to engage in most forms of gambling. It has also been noted that adolescents may be more susceptible to pathological gambling than adults. For instance, in the UK, a number of studies have consistently highlighted a figure representing 5% to 6% of pathological gamblers among adolescent slot machine gamblers. This figure is at least two to three times higher than that identified in adult populations. Young people are clearly more vulnerable than adults to the negative consequences of gambling. A typical finding of many adolescent gambling studies has been that problem or pathological gambling appears to be a primarily male phenomenon. Other factors that have been linked with adolescent problem gambling include working-class youth culture, delinquency, alcohol and substance abuse, poor school performance, theft, and truancy.

THE IMPACT OF INTERNET GAMBLING

To add to this, there are now other media in which to gamble. One of the most interesting innovations is in the area of Internet gambling. Many potential concerns relating to the social impact of Internet gambling have been raised, including inadequate protection for vulnerable groups (such as adolescents and problem gamblers), unscrupulous operators, and exploitative marketing. Another major concern relating to the increase in gambling opportunities is the potential rise in the number of problem gamblers (i.e., "gambling addicts"). Addictions always result from the interaction and interplay of many factors, including one's biological and genetic predispositions, psychological constitution, social environment, and the nature of the activity itself. However, in the case of gambling, it has been argued that technology and technological advance can themselves be important contributory factors in addictiveness.

A number of factors make online activities such as Internet gambling potentially seductive and addictive. Such factors include anonymity, convenience, escape, dissociation and immersion, accessibility, event frequency, interactivity, disinhibition, simulation, and asociability. Another factor relating to Internet gambling is the changing nature of family entertainment. The increase in and development of home entertainment systems are changing the pattern of many families' leisure activities. The need to seek entertainment leisure outside the home has been greatly reduced, as digital television and home cinema systems offer a multitude of interactive entertainment services and information. As a result, many families adopt the leisure pattern known as *cocooning*, in which the family or individual concentrates leisure time around in-house entertainment systems rather than going out, and the entertainment comes to the home via digital television and Internet services. In the not-too-distant future, part of this entertainment for many families may be Internet gambling.

To date, there has been very little empirical research into Internet gambling and only one study that included adolescents. In a 2001 study, Mark Griffiths carried out a prevalence survey in the United Kingdom examining Internet gambling. Of the 2,098 people surveyed (918 male and 1,180 female), only 495 (24%) were Internet users. Participants between 15 and 19 years of age (n = 119) were asked whether they had ever gambled on the Internet and, if so, whether they had used a parent's credit card. The results showed that none of the respondents gambled regularly on the Internet (i.e., once a week or more) and that only 1% of the Internet users were occasional Internet gamblers (i.e., less than once a week). Results also showed that a further 4% had never gambled but would like to do so, and the remaining 95% had never gambled on the Internet and said they were unlikely to

do so. Unfortunately, this study is now very old, especially given the rapid growth of the Internet, so it tells us little about what is happening at present.

To a gambling addict, the Internet can be a potentially dangerous medium. For instance, it has been speculated that structural characteristics of the software itself may promote addictive tendencies. Structural characteristics promote interactivity and, to some extent, define alternative realities to users and allow them feelings of anonymity—features that may be very psychologically rewarding to such individuals. There is no doubt that Internet usage among the general population will continue to increase over the next few years. If social pathologies exist, then there is a need for further research. Despite evidence that both gambling and the Internet can be potentially addictive, there is no evidence to date that Internet gambling is "doubly addictive," particularly as the Internet appears to be just a medium in which to engage in the behavior of choice. The Internet may lead social gamblers who use the Internet (rather than Internet users per se) to gamble more excessively than they would have done offline.

—Mark D. Griffiths

See also Electronic Games, Addiction to; Internet Use, Addiction to; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of

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INTERNET USE, GENDER AND

Gender impacts the role of the Internet in the lives of children and adolescents in a number of ways. Access to the Internet differs for males and females, although these differences are significantly affected by the age of users and by other user characteristics. Researchers have found significant differences in the ways in which boys and girls use the Internet, and a growing amount of gender-specific content is available. Although qualitative studies of gender-specific Internet use are limited, the impact of the Internet on gender identity appears to have both positive and negative aspects.

THE INTERNET GENDER GAP

Access to information and communications technology (ICT) in the information society of today's world has a considerable influence on the extent to which people are integrated into their social and professional settings and are active participants (both generally and commercially) in society. The fact that there are still many groups of people without access to the Internet, the "information have-nots" in contrast to the "information haves" who do have access, is known as the *digital divide.* Internationally, the divide is between the more technically and economically developed countries and the less so—for example, many in Africa are on the "wrong" side of the divide. Within any one country, some sections of the population are digitally underprivileged, such as the children of families of low socioeconomic status. Gender is also a feature of the digital divide. The expression *gender gap* denotes the phenomenon whereby girls and women in many countries have less access to the Internet than do boys and men.

Data from a representative survey carried out in 2002 and 2003 and reported by the University of California at Los Angeles in 2005 indicated an average gender gap, in favor of the male population, of 8% across the 12 countries selected. There were great variations between countries: The gender gap in Internet access was as high as 20% in Italy (men: 42%; women: 22%) and as low as 1% in Taiwan (men: 25%, women: 24%). In the United States, 73% of men used the Internet, compared to 69% of women. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), an international organization within the United Nations system, likewise collects data on global access to the Internet and records the national gender gaps. The Internet gender gap is particularly serious when the lack of access is not only to online activity but also to the (usually well-paid) jobs and careers associated with the Internet and telecommunications generally.

There are many reasons for the Internet gender gap. The masculine gender role is a better match than the feminine one to the taking of an interest in new technology, its appreciation, and its voluntary exploration. Boys and men acquire computer and Internet skills sooner in training and at work than do women, who reveal more negative attitudes and anxieties about new technology. Boys are more likely than girls to have computers of their own. Computer and Internet courses specifically targeted at girls and women are intended to encourage them to make use of the Internet. However, it should not be forgotten that, in many countries, the Internet (no longer seen merely as a techno-toy for male computer freaks) is now appreciated by the general public as an everyday communications tool to such an extent that girls, in particular, are making free with it.

There is a close association between age (among other social and demographic factors) and gender-based barriers to Internet use. The number of older females with Internet access is much lower than that of older males, but the ratio of male to female among online children and adolescents is better balanced. There is even a gender gap in favor of girls in some circumstances: In 2000, a representative survey in the United States reported by Lenhart, Madden, and Hitlin found 79% of sixth-grade girls online, but only 44% of sixth-grade boys.

INTERNET USE BY GENDER

The gender differences in Internet access are low in comparison with the highly visible differences between boys and girls in their use of the Internet. The term *digital inequality,* rather than *digital divide,* is used to describe the situation wherein a section of the population has Internet access but fails to exhaust its possibilities because the patterns of use are so limited.

In a study conducted in 2000 and reported by Lenhart, Rainie, and Lewis, Internet use in the United States reflected classic gender roles in that 7% more girls than boys between the ages of 12 and 17 used the Internet for social communication (by email and instant messaging) and for looking up information on diets, health, and fitness. In contrast, on average, 18% more boys than girls turned to the Internet for sports results, the chance to play online games, or the creation of their own home pages. The research revealed no significant differences between the sexes, however, for adolescents' motivation to have fun on the Internet, to chat, to look up details of television, films, musicians, or sports personalities, and to express their opinions.

In this American study, females in the 15-to-17 age group were designated the "power users" of the Internet, whereas a 2004 British study by Madell and Muncer emphasized that male teenagers were more intensively involved in the Internet. Patterns of Internet use specific to the genders do have to be analyzed differentially for individual cultures, social groupings, and points in historical time. There is also room for more detailed research on the extent to which problematic patterns of use (*Internet misuse*) are gender specific.

GENDER IDENTITY ONLINE

While using the Internet, girls and boys rarely act with complete anonymity. Indeed, they declare personal information to organizations (such as online shops) or other Internet users (such as online chat partners), and in most cases this includes their sex. The option to hide one's sex by using a gender-neutral nickname or email address or even by changing one's gender (*gender switching/swapping/bending*) during online communication (role playing such as that on MUDs—multiple user domains—or chat) is, in practice, only rarely exercised.

It would thus be unrealistic to portray online communication in general as an arena wherein users consciously employ and analyze gender as a social construction, actively and reflexively manipulating their own "cybergenders." However, there appear to be some adolescents (e.g., those taking classes in psychology and sensitized to gender issues) who make full use of this option. The hope expressed during the pioneering stages of the Internet—that it would lead to a softening of gender boundaries—has turned into fear that gender stereotyping actually may be on the increase. When people know very little of each other, as is the case in online communication because it is mainly text based, a person's sex, often immediately recognizable by a nickname or an email address, contributes particularly to the impression they give. School projects on the Internet could well include learning how to take online gender identities with a pinch of salt. It is worth bearing in mind that, at both younger and older ages, people using online services (such as contacts for flirting or sex) will fake their age or ethnicity far more often than their gender. Teachers

and guardians can offer guidance to discourage unethical misuse of this freedom of action.

In addition to the explicit online gender identity shown in a male or female name or a gendered *avatar* (a visual online representation of an Internet user in the form of a photographic self-portrait, a cartoon figure, or a three-dimensional virtual character), gender identities are also constructed indirectly by means of individual types of verbal and nonverbal behavior demonstrated on the Net. The space given by the medium makes positive behavioral shifts possible—boys may open up emotionally or girls take on more assertive or even aggressive roles. In offline life, this can be more difficult. Whereas preadolescent girls will communicate more intensively with other girls during an online role-play, and boys will interact more actively with other boys in the context of the game, Calvert and colleagues found that, during boy-girl interactions, both boys and girls will moderate their behavior patterns to facilitate computer-mediated communication with the opposite sex. Qualitative analyses of the gender-specific use of individual Internet services are largely lacking; for example, in chat and emails between boys and girls, the commonalities and differences relating to power, emotionality, or sexuality have not yet been researched.

GENDERED ONLINE CONTENT

There are a number of gender-specific types of Internet content, such as websites and posts in online forums. The massive amount of soft-core and hard-core pornography available on the Internet is a particularly prominent example—for the most part, images of girls and women are offered to a heterosexual male audience. There is a joking translation in Internet jargon of GIF (Graphic Interchange Format) as "Girls in Files." In the early 1990s, search engines frequently came up with pornographic sites in response to searches for "women," "girls," or "lesbians." Research into online material relating to girls and women was hindered by these search results, and the Web appeared to be a male-dominated domain. To avoid unwanted confrontations with such pornography, online projects designed for and by girls and women often operate under slightly modified labels. "Gurl" is used as the spelling for a girls' Internet portal (www.gurl.com), and it is no accident that the network of professional women in media refers to "grrls" (www.webgrrls.com). There are also a number of specialist online catalogues (e.g., www.femina.com) of sites and other online resources maintained for, by, and about women. Today, search engines offer inbuilt filters that omit obviously pornographic matter from their results.

Lastly, the Internet is a clear opportunity to produce and distribute content cheaply and efficiently for niche audiences, such as girls or boys who are marginalized in society (e.g., gay teenagers). Such contributions include those with an explicitly emancipatory appeal, encouraging girls and boys to reject traditional gender stereotypes. Female authors of Web content report that they value highly the option the Web offers them to publish a personal or an unequivocally feminist home page or e-zine (electronic magazine)—content that is hardly distributed by the mass media.

—Nicola Döring

See also Chat Rooms, Social and Linguistic Processes in; Computer Use, Gender and; Digital Divide; Digital Literacy; Gender Identity Development; Internet Blocking; Internet Pornography, Effects of; Multi-User Dungeons/Domains (MUDs); Personal Web Pages; Pornography, Internet; Sexual Information, Internet and; Sexual Minorities, Portrayals of; Websites, Children's; Zines

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INTERNET USE, HOMENET STUDY AND

In the mid-1990s, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University founded the HomeNet Project, in which they gave Internet access to families across the United States and then documented how the family members used the Internet through a series of studies. The final accumulation of data comes from a series of longitudinal studies, done every year between 1995 and 2002, that look at how families use the World Wide Web, email, instant messaging, online chat groups, bulletin boards, weblogs, and other technologies associated with the Internet. A total of 264 families participated in the series of studies; the first groups of families were from the Pittsburgh area and the later ones from a national pool. Ten professors from Carnegie Mellon oversaw the research for the project and published articles in a number of scholarly journals based on the data culled from the project, which was funded in part from a grant from the National Science Foundation and supported by numerous companies who provided the computers, Internet access, and other technology needed for the project.

Of particular interest with respect to children and adolescents is one of the earlier study's finding that greater use of the Internet can be associated with declines in the size of participants' social networks, declines in communication within the family, and, for teenagers, declines in social support. Furthermore, the researchers contended in the early study that heavy use of the Internet could be associated with loneliness and depression, but that after a person's first years online, the negative symptoms may drop or reverse. These increases in depressive symptoms were found to be greater for those with more social resources, such as people who regularly communicate in person with others or those who belong to more community organizations. Many scholars criticized this finding and argued that the measures and samples used to find the data were flawed, and in a follow-up study several years later within the HomeNet project, the researchers changed their own initial findings, saying that the participants' use of the Internet had a generally positive impact on communication, social involvement, and well-being.

One of the studies for the project examines the role of communication technologies in maintaining long-distance friendships of teenagers over a three-year period as they move from high school into college. The authors found that communication slows the decline in psychological closeness as students move away from their high school friends, but psychological closeness does not slow the decline in communication. They cite email and instant messaging as the Internet technologies that are especially useful for maintaining friendships and psychological closeness among the teens. Another article on the topic of instant messaging found that adolescents depend on instant messaging not only to maintain closeness with individual peers but also to forge social identity within peer groups. The authors contend that the simulated act of "hanging out" with friends was bolstered by the lack of rigidity and social norms that might be encountered in spending time with peer groups in real life.

Despite some criticism of the methodology and findings within the research, the HomeNet studies continue to be widely cited in both academic and professional circles as some of the more interesting early research on the effect of Internet use on people's lives.

—Shayla Thiel

See also Instant Messaging; Internet Uses, Social

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INTERNET USE, INTERNATIONAL

Over the past decade, there has been a rapid expansion in the use of the Internet in the Westernized world. According to the latest figures, 68.2% of all those in the United States have access to the Internet, representing a growth of 107% between 2000 and 2005, and 36% of all Europeans now have access to the Internet, a growth of 172% for the same period. The usage figures for children and adolescents appear to mirror overall usage figures. In 2003, a U.S. study found that 65% of American children used the Internet, a 59% growth rate from the year 2000. The same report found that teenagers spent more time online than watching television, for example, 3.5 hours versus 3.1 hours per day.

A 1998 study of international Internet use found that, on average, around 100% of secondary schools in Singapore and Iceland had Internet access. The figures were 95% in Canada and Finland, 88% in New Zealand, 85% in Slovenia and Denmark, 81% in Norway, 80% in Hong Kong, 72% in Italy, 58% in Japan, 55% in France, 52% in Israel, 42% in Hungary, 41% in Belgium (French), 30% in the Czech Republic, 25% in Bulgaria, and 23% in Thailand.

Children and adolescents are growing up in societies where the Internet is an extremely prominent form of media, and they are introduced to it at an early age, either at home or at school. At the same time, there have been many controversies about child and adolescent Internet use, primarily concerning censorship and limits to stop pornographic, violent, or commercially exploitative content. Other issues relate to ensuring the safety of children and adolescents, particularly protecting them from pedophiles or other "strangers" who intend to do harm. There have also been concerns about the addictive potential of the Internet and about children spending too much time surfing the Web. However, many parents see the benefits of the Internet for helping with homework and other scholarly uses, and the advent of broadband technology has meant that Internet use for many has become a relatively cheap resource no longer tied to the cost of phone calls. Internet use internationally has allowed children and adolescents to communicate with each other across the world and to share ideas and experiences as well as providing access to rich international sources of information.

GLOBAL CONTROVERSIES

Much concern has been expressed about child and adolescent use of the Internet, especially about potential exposure to pornographic, violent, or otherwise inappropriate material. Much of this concern focuses on the fact that little can be done to censor the Internet itself or to prevent children and adolescents from viewing such materials. One attempt has been to use software (e.g., CyberPatrol and Net Nanny) that filter content and block websites if they contain words suggesting unsuitable content. However, many children and adolescents are often more proficient at using the Internet than their parents, who frequently do not understand how to implement such controls, and children know how to circumvent these restrictions. More recently, the widespread introduction of WAP cell phones and video game consoles linked to the Internet has freed Internet use from the confines of the personal computer. The result is even less physical control of children and adolescents' usage by their parents or other guardians.

Other concerns relate to the possible negative effects of spending too much time on the Internet and

the potential for addiction. However, as Mark Griffiths points out in an overview of the literature, no conclusive research has yet shown that using the Internet is more addictive than activities using other forms of media, such as playing video games, watching television, or reading books. Excessive Internet use is often symptomatic of other problems in a person's life (e.g., relationship problems, coping difficulties, lack of friends). However, many parents are worried that their children spend too much time on the Internet at the expense of social activities such as sports and making and meeting with friends. Some children's organizations have suggested codes of conduct for parents to follow that encourage them to teach their children to be "Internet wise," in the same way that they teach them to be "street wise" (e.g., to be wary of strangers, to not give out personal information). One example is the Internet safety guidelines available on the website of NCH, a children's charity based in the United Kingdom. These guidelines also highlight problem signs, such as secretiveness and unwillingness of children to talk about their Internet use. They also suggest that parents monitor and limit their children's Internet sessions to avoid impinging on other activities and to maintain healthy (non-Internet-based) social interactions.

EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL USES

The Internet can also be a place for social development and discovery, providing children and adolescents with a variety of ways of communicating with others around the world. Discussion groups, online communities, and personal websites or blogs are all examples of the ways that digital identities can be explored and developed. In educational terms, the Internet is increasingly used as a medium for progressive learning, and it appears to have some advantages over traditional teaching methods. For example, Amy Bruckman notes that one advantage of this type of media over more traditional teaching methods is that groups of online learners can motivate and support each other's learning experiences.

In her study of children's media culture in the new millennium, Kathryn Montgomery points out that the Internet serves a variety of functions for children and adolescents: Emails and instant messaging act as telephones, search engines are like libraries, chat rooms and discussion groups serve as meeting places, online shopping is akin to going to a mall, and downloadable media such as films and music function as cinema or concert experiences.

In addition to children's own personal websites, there are also a growing number of websites specifically aimed at children. Although these sites cater to the interests of children and adolescents, the content varies considerably and can be loosely divided into commercial (including product-based) sites and noncommercial sites (which can be broadly classified as educational, civic, or charitable). Although the majority of sites provide information, useful links, games, and often such features as chat rooms, there have been concerns that some commercial sites, particularly those that are product based, are used to target young people as consumers in a rapidly expanding digital marketplace.

Some governments have been active in developing legislation to try to protect children in cyberspace. An example is the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA) in the United States. Another approach has been to provide guidelines and recommendations, such as the European Union's Safer Internet Action Plan. However, little is currently being done to monitor the overall quality of websites aimed at children and adolescents. Ultimately, measures that teach children and adolescents to be both critical and wary of Internet content may be more successful than legislation or guidelines that struggle to keep up with the development of rapidly expanding digital media.

—Richard T. A. Wood

See also Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Computer Use in Schools; Electronic Games, Moral Behavior in; Internet Use, Addiction to; Websites, Children's

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INTERNET USE, POSITIVE EFFECTS OF

The increasing use of the Internet by children and adolescents in the 1990s was viewed with cautious skepticism by parents and scholars alike, with questions being raised about addiction, social isolation, and consumption of age-inappropriate content, among other negative effects. But recent research suggests that Internet use is not always harmful and that the new medium can have a number of positive uses. With the rapid integration of the Internet into educational activities at all levels, schoolchildren and adolescents use it as a necessary informational tool for pursuing their curricular and academic goals. At home, they use it primarily as a communication medium—for interacting with others via electronic mail, instant messaging, and other such applications. Younger children's use of the Internet is informed by their level of literacy, by whether they have access through an adult, and by their maturing cognitive and social skills. For adolescents, the drive for identity and community within their peer groups is more critical in shaping their Internet use. For children with special needs (e.g., those with autism or Down's syndrome) or those isolated at home for health reasons, the Internet can be a means to connect with the rest of the world, particularly with others in the same situation and with online support groups.

POSITIVE INTERNET USE AT DIFFERENT AGES

Children and adolescents often use the Internet as a platform to enable other technologies or media. Miki Baumgarten has documented age-based differences in Internet use. Preschoolers are attracted to stories with colorful characters they recognize and to educational programs where they can learn the alphabet, colors, and navigational skills, whereas older children aged 6 to 9 prefer Internet tasks that build self-esteem through positive reinforcement. Tweens aged 10 to 14 have the cognitive and manipulative skills to function independently on the Internet. Like younger children, when they go online they want to have fun, learn, and grow. Social learning, however, is a priority at this age, and the Internet gives tweens a platform to communicate privately with their friends through chat rooms, email, and instant messaging, as well as providing information about trends. Most communication occurs in private settings (i.e., email and instant messaging) with friends seen offline on a daily basis about ordinary but intimate topics such as gossip.

In one major study by Elisheva Gross, the daily reports of 7th- and 10th-grade public-school students revealed no association between Internet usage and well-being. The only seemingly maladaptive behavior among adolescents on the Internet is the tendency to assume online identities that are different from their real-life identities. Although this behavior encompassed a range of content, context, and motives, children reported that such pretension was either in jest or to explore a desired or future identity. Sherry Turkle considers such "identity play" a healthy way of experimenting with one's own identity because the Internet provides a safe haven for risk-free assessment of others' reactions to one's assumed online identity.

ONLINE GAMES

Miki Baumgarten argues that, for children aged 6 to 9, improved reading ability, memory capacity, reasoning skills, and mathematical understanding expand the range of positive Internet use to include participation in composition, memory-based games, strategy-based activities, and numbers play. For tweens to be adequately challenged, games and other online applications must be more difficult and more exciting and must require logic, strategy, and abstract thinking. Males prefer violence, sports, danger, and competition in their games and activities, whereas females are attracted to Internet activities that feature relationships, looks, and trends.

ACADEMIC WORK ONLINE

The Internet is also a valued research tool for academic tasks, allowing tweens to bypass the library, use of which many see as time consuming and labor

intensive. Numerous studies reveal that parents arrange access to the Internet in an attempt to improve their children's education. A blurring of the distinction between learning at home and at school begs the question of whether schools should take lessons learned from home use or vice versa. Researchers ask what kind of learning the Internet enhances and whether pencil-and-paper tests can adequately measure what children learn on the Internet. Some argue that the Internet will soon allow mass customization in testing because assessment is potentially interactive, switched (it will allow simultaneous delivery of different material to different students), broadband, networked, and standardized.

Thirty years of research on educational television have yielded some cross-media design principles that can be harnessed for positive educational use of the Internet. Moreover, scholars such as Sandra Calvert see the convergence of television and computers as an advancement for educational media because it will help overcome criticism leveled at television's alleged passivity, lack of user control, and level of difficulty. Indeed, interactivity is considered the most distinctive aspect of the Internet medium, with vast potential for learning effects. Constructionists who argue that children learn best by doing, rather than by simply reading, are exploring the potential of the Internet to support children's creativity in relation to content production. The emerging field of IDC (interaction design and children) stresses collaboration between designers and children in designing interface elements as well as content elements such as story narrative and characters. In addition to interactivity, multimedia have been shown to result in learning benefits, especially science lessons, by adding visual modes of presentation to verbal explanations, thereby leading to a integrated mental representation of prior knowledge and verbal and pictorial information.

SOCIOEMOTIONAL USES

For parents who are caring for children with lifelong medical and psychological needs, the Internet is a private source of information and a way to connect with other parents with similar challenges. An early study by Kristin Mickelson suggested that parents of children with mental retardation, autism, or developmental delays received greater social support from electronic groups involving other parents of such children than from offline friends and relatives. A more recent study by Amos Fleischmann found that narratives posted on the Internet by parents of children with autism described dealing with autism as a challenge rather than perceiving themselves as victims; they chronicled the shift in their perspective after a diagnosis, which culminated in a desire to help other parents.

Marina Bers, Edith Ackermann, and others, who conducted a study in a Boston hospital, found that children aged 7 to 16 with heart disease benefited from an interactive storytelling environment to cope with their illnesses, hospitalization, and invasive procedures. Children interacted with SAGE (Storytelling Agent Generation Environment) with the assistance of an interactive stuffed animal to explore how they were feeling and share their stories with others. In another participatory interactive environment, Alissa Antle documented children's reactions to OutBurst, an online networked activity that supports children's expression of their reaction to current events with comic-strip-style personal representations (using thought bubbles), public and private expression, and virtual guides, in an effort to use the Internet as a medium for supporting children's emotional development.

USING THE INTERNET POSITIVELY

Ensuring positive uses of the Internet for children depends on government policy and adult supervision. The U.S. government provides some policies that aim to protect children online. For example, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) spells out what private information website operators may collect from children under 13 online. It has been enforced by the Federal Trade Commission since 2000.

Beyond lobbying for policies to keep younger children safe, Shalom Fisch suggests that parents, teachers, and other adults who want to maximize educational benefits may want to consider matching the reading level of children to online activities; the way visuals, humor, and action factor into the appeal of the activity; whether the game, narrative, or humor draws attention to the educational content; whether fonts or color make the site legible; and whether formal features such as close-ups highlight educational points. Teaching adolescents to protect themselves online is critical, as the Internet is ubiquitous and increasingly important as communication in their lives. The question of how the Internet may serve to encourage more civic discourse among older children and adolescents is still open and may depend on the guidance of

educators and government policies that support public service media as it competes with the entertainment industry for their attention.

—Elizabeth Hutton and S. Shyam Sundar

See also Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Computer Use, Socialization and; Educational Television, Programming in; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and; Media Effects; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of

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INTERNET USE, PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF

The ever-growing availability and accessibility of the Internet has prompted a considerable amount of research investigating the various ways in which Internet use can affect important psychological variables, such as people's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. In general, the psychological consequences of Internet use have been examined from two distinct perspectives—the amount of Internet use and the motivations behind it, each with a host of both positive and negative psychological effects. Most recent findings result from two large longitudinal studies developed at Carnegie Mellon University and designed to document antecedents and consequences of home Internet use for the general population (HomeNet Project), as well as for the low-income population (HomenetToo Project). A similar project, Internet and Society, was conducted at Stanford University. Typical psychological outcome considerations are depression, social isolation, loneliness, addiction, academic performance, and civic engagement. Although most research in this area involves college students and American adults, the findings are applicable to children and adolescents as well, with important implications for their psychological development.

AMOUNT OF INTERNET USE

The first strand of research investigating psychological effects of Internet use conceptualizes Internet use by focusing on the amount of use (heavy vs. light). In this tradition, research has revealed that the heavier the Internet use by children and teenagers, the more negative the impact on their depression, loneliness, and social isolation, and the greater the risk of Internet addiction. This pattern of results has been typically attributed to a displacement effect; that is, the time spent using the Internet comes at the cost of involvement in everyday, face-to-face social activities. Internet use is not only associated with reduced social involvement but also with declines in overall

psychological well-being. Robert Kubey of Rutgers University and his colleagues found that Internet use is associated with declines in academic performance among college students. Depression and new psychological disorders spurred by Internet use, such as Internet dependency, are likely to lead not only to social withdrawal but also to less time spent studying and therefore to poorer academic performance.

Somewhat contradictory findings and theorizing have contributed to a debate about the role of Internet use in promoting and hindering civic engagement and participation. On the one hand, such scholars as Cass Sunstein have suggested that the ability to customize and personalize online content leads to selective exposure to information that is consistent with one's already-established beliefs, thereby decreasing openness to different perspectives and constructive dialogue and ultimately limiting participation in the public sphere. On the other hand, scholars such as Shanto Iyengar have suggested that constructive dialogue and civic engagement are enhanced by this very customization ability in that it also enables users to be more purposive and pro-active in their perusal of online content. Further, it is claimed that this increased user control leads to a corresponding increase in civic engagement.

MOTIVATIONS FOR INTERNET USE

Researchers have also acknowledged the limitations of treating Internet use as a monolithic concept by suggesting that there is no one main effect of Internet use on the average person, so we should consider the differential patterns, modes, and motivations of Internet use. Thus, when the patterns and motivations for Internet use are taken into account, most of the results mentioned above have been further parsed out to reflect a specific set of circumstances, fostering both positive and negative consequences of Internet use. For example, although amount of Internet use overall appears to negatively impact depression and loneliness, this holds true mainly when users go online to meet other people or for entertainment purposes. Dominant uses of the Internet, such as communication with family and friends and information seeking, do not affect depression, social isolation, or loneliness; on the contrary, they might lead to one's overall well-being and social network extension, a finding that holds across all age groups. Likewise, a large survey conducted by David Greenfield has demystified the concept of Internet addiction by revealing that, for all age groups, Internet dependency is fostered not by the overall amount of Internet use, but rather by specific uses of the Internet. Some of the Web activities that are more prone to lead to Internet addiction are chat rooms, visiting pornography sites, online shopping, and e-mail communication. Further, academic performance has been shown to also be differentially affected, depending on the type of Internet use. Although studies with college students have revealed that academic performance is lowered by Internet use for recreational and communication purposes, especially when communication is synchronous (such as in instant messaging and chat rooms), a HomeNetToo study conducted with children showed that academic performance is enhanced by heavily text-based, general Web use.

TECHNOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THE INTERNET

In addition, a distinct body of research is devoted to investigating the psychological effects of technological features of the Internet and computers. The media equation literature documents the various ways in which computer users tend to treat the communication medium itself as a source; that is, computers and the computer networks are viewed as autonomous beings instead of simply as conduits for delivery of preprogrammed content. This is evident from several findings that show that computer users automatically apply rules of human-human communication to their interactions with computers. They are polite to computers, apply gender stereotypes, and are otherwise social toward computers, televisions, and other communication technologies. Furthermore, they tend to form long-term affiliations with particular computer terminals, showing anthropomorphic loyalty to specific terminals.

Much of this tendency is attributed to the technology's ability to mimic human interaction, due primarily to features such as use of language and interactivity. In fact, research with websites has identified interactivity as one of the key sources of psychological effects. Apart from *interactivity* (i.e., mutual discourse, be it between user and Internet interfaces or between various users via the Internet interface), S. Shyam Sundar of Penn State University has identified other technological features such as *customization* (i.e., personalization and selective exposure to online content), *modality* (appealing to different senses, commonly referred to as

"multimedia") and *navigability* (structure and ease of navigation of online content) as significantly affecting user cognitions, emotions, and behaviors. Interactivity builds contingency in communications, that is, dependency or threadedness between messages (as in a series of exchanges about the same topic in an IM conversation, in which each message builds not only on the immediately preceding message but also on the whole sequence of previous messages), while multiple modalities increase the perceptual bandwidth for experiencing content and customization, and navigation offers opportunities for idiosyncratic exploration of content. These factors serve to enhance user engagement with Internet content, thus boosting the possibility of effortful consideration of mediated messages, leading to corresponding psychological effects.

In conclusion, we have seen that psychological effects of Internet use are neither uniform nor universal but rather are contingent on individuals' patterns of Internet use and, to some extent, on the Internet's technological features. Deliberate, judicious, and moderate use of the Internet, coupled with an ability to fully respond to the new medium's technological features, are likely to enhance the psychological benefits derived by children and adolescents. Early alarms about monotonic negative associations of Internet use with psychological well-being and academic performance are largely unfounded as newer research unfolds more nuanced effects of this new medium.

—Carmen Stavrositu and S. Shyam Sundar

See also Computer Use, Rates of; Computer Use, Socialization and; Interactive Media; Internet Use, HomeNet Study and; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of; Media Effects

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INTERNET USE, RATES AND PURPOSES OF

Computers and the Internet are commonplace in the lives of American youth, from toddlers to teens. More than 85% of the country's children live in households that have computers. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation study, nearly all school-age children have gone online at least once, but both Internet access and habitual Internet use are contingent on household income, parental education, and race and ethnicity.

The Kaiser study also reports that children's home-based Internet access and likelihood of using the Internet in a typical day are higher among whites and increase with household income and parents' education level. About 80% of non-Hispanic white children and 75% of Asian children use a computer at home, whereas only 47% of black children and 50% of Hispanic children do so, according to U.S. Census Bureau data reported by Day, Janus, and Davis. About

a quarter of children live in households with broadband Internet access (National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2004). The figures for children who use computers at school, however, are roughly equal, according to the U.S. Census report. This does not mean that all U.S. children enjoy equal access overall, as school-based computer use is dictated by teaching schedules and the number of available terminals.

Age also plays a factor in terms of Internet use. More than four out of five children who have access to computers at home use them to play games, and two thirds use them for schoolwork. This difference likely is a function of age, because although young children start out playing games, they begin to use a broader range of software applications as they grow older. Between 85% and 90% of older teenagers use the computer most often for schoolwork and to access the Internet, according to U.S. Census data.

Those data also indicate that the percentage of children who use the Internet at home climbs as they get older. Of minors who live in households with Internet access, about a quarter of children ages 3 to 5 use the Internet at home; 48% of children ages 6 to 9 do so, followed by 77% of youths ages 10 to 14 and 92% of youths ages 15 to 17. The most common online activities, whether at home, at school, or elsewhere, are to complete schoolwork (75%) and to play games (65%). About 60% of children said they use the Internet for e-mail or instant messaging.

Apparently, young children are gaining computer skills earlier than they were 5 years ago. According to a survey published by the Kaiser Family Foundation, 28% of 2-year-olds have used a computer on a parent's lap, compared with 11% of 6-year-olds who had done so at age 2; and 17% of 2-year-olds have used a mouse to point and click, compared with 5% of 6-year-olds who had done so when they were 2 years old (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartella, 2003).

The same survey indicates that about half of children ages 6 and under, nearly one third of children aged 6 months to 3 years, and 70% of children between 4 and 6 years of age have used a computer. Seven percent of these children had computers in their bedrooms. About a quarter of children 4 to 6 years old use computers daily, spending 1 hour at the computer. In addition, 4 out of 10 children in this age group use computers at least several times a week, with approximately 30% having navigated to a specific website.

A recent Pew Internet & American Life Project report, "Teens and Technology," offers further insights specifically pertaining to the teenage segment. This report suggests that more than 50% of online teens enjoy broadband access at home, and almost 90% of American teenagers used the Internet in 2004 (see Kerner, 2005). This report also provides some glimpses into how Internet use among youth differs from Internet use among adults. For example, the youth segment is much more likely to use the Internet to play games, to search for information about academic institutions, and for instant messaging. Both youngsters and adults are likely to use the Internet at approximately the same rate for email activity, news and current affairs, and searching for religious or spiritual information. However, adults tend to use the Internet substantially more than the younger segment for such activities as e-commerce, health information seeking, and job hunting. Typical online activities for youth that have seen an increase over the 5-year period from 2000 to 2005 include playing games, e-commerce, and information seeking. On the other hand, this period has also seen a decline in email use. Finally, gender differences are starting to emerge—a Jupiter report showed that teenage girls spend 22% more time online than teenage boys but that they spend their online time in predominantly different ways (see Giesen, 2005), suggesting that online marketers and retailers have to adopt more nuanced marketing tactics to cater to different youth segments. Teenage boys, for example, spend more than double the time playing online games that teenage girls do. Whereas boys spend more time with games, girls spend more time using email, instant messaging, and visiting websites, according to a Kaiser Foundation study reported by Roberts, Foehr, and Rideout. Marketers who target adolescent males, then, should seek to tie their campaigns to games, and those who wish to reach female teens might wish to make use of websites and online social networking.

—Robert Magee and Sriram Kalyanaraman

See also Computer Use, Age Differences in; Computer Use, Gender and; Computer Use, Rates of; Gender, Media Use and

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INTERNET USE, SOCIAL

The Internet's appeal for adolescents has a strong social component. The growing technology has spawned a diversity of ways in which children and adolescents can communicate through the Internet. This entry examines some of these forms of communication.

DIRECT FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Direct forms of communication include email, instant messaging, chat rooms, and discussion boards, forums, and newsgroups.

Email. Email allows a person to send a letter or mail to another person electronically and is one of the commonest forms of Internet communication.

Instant messaging (IM). Instant messaging allows real-time, synchronous communication. It usually takes place between two people who know each other and is akin to having a conversation using written text instead of spoken words. However, most instant messaging programs today allow voice and video communications as well. Text is the commonest method of IM communication because it does not require the faster Internet connections needed for voice and video communication. In addition, instant messaging is no longer limited to the computer; most cell phones are enabled with text messaging, which allows a similar type of communication (and sometimes uses the same instant messaging programs as the computer).

Chat rooms. Chat rooms are similar to instant messaging programs, in that they are in text and synchronous. One difference, however, is the greater possibility that, in chat rooms people may not know each other. And in chat rooms, one is also more likely to communicate with a group of people rather than only one other person. Chat rooms generally are associated with a topic, such as gay and lesbian teens.

Discussion boards, forums, and newsgroups. Like chat rooms, these are associated with particular topics, but the communication is asynchronous. A discussion board, forum, or newsgroup is very much like a room with a big board, where individuals can put a message on the board for everyone to see, and other individuals can respond to the message. In some cases, discussion boards have other uses as well, such as posting event calendars, putting up pictures and files, and polling members about various topics of interest.

INDIRECT FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

In indirect forms of communication, users communicate with the general Internet public. To a great extent, communication is one-way; the communicator speaks to the Internet public more than the Internet public communicates with the creator. Three indirect forms of communication are websites, blogs, and webcams.

Websites. Some individuals may create websites to express themselves, whether it be to display their artwork, to express their opinions, or to provide information.

Blogs. Blogs (short for weblogs) generally do the same thing as websites; however, blogs are usually in diary format. Individuals can journal their expressions daily, weekly, monthly, or irregularly (such as when important events occur).

Webcams. It is possible to broadcast video images via a webcam (short for web camera) for the Internet public to view. Generally, access to video images is restricted to people with permission to view the webcam. This is another way adolescents can express themselves, but in a dynamic, real-time fashion.

THE INTERNET AS A SOCIAL FORUM

One of the more powerful capacities of the Internet is to gather people of similar interests together, from one's own high school to anywhere across the globe. This ability has led to the creation of online communities, in which adolescents with similar interests can connect and communicate with each other. Generally, these communities take the form of chat rooms, discussion boards, forums, or newsgroups. The nature of the interests vary widely; for example, it may deal with core issues that an adolescent is facing, such as religion, or it may be involve finding someone with whom to develop a friendship. The Internet is also the ultimate free speech space, which works in both positive and negative ways. In a positive sense, the Internet allows adolescents who may be facing unpopular issues, concerns, or ideas to find others to communicate with. For instance, adolescents who may be gay or lesbian can find others and talk with them about problems or concerns they might be facing. In a negative sense, it may allow adolescents with negative ideas, tendencies, or concerns to find similar others and may help to propagate these negative tendencies. One example of these negative possibilities are websites directed to adolescents with anorexia nervosa. Anorexic adolescents can find groups and websites that will help them maintain the disorder and cheat the systems designed to help them overcome it. These adolescents believe that anorexia nervosa is a way of life rather than a disorder, and they affectionately call their disorder "Ana."

Researchers have also pointed to another important function of social use of the Internet: helping adolescents establish their sense of identity. Because it is possible to be completely anonymous on the Internet, adolescents are allowed to try out different identities in these various social communities. Adolescents can see what different identities feel like and determine which ones they feel comfortable with. To some degree, the Internet requires one to specify an identity; all the direct forms of communication require one to have a user name, which is rarely one's actual name but instead something that describes who one is; and Internet communities also allow one to establish a profile that includes such information as age, sex, location, occupation, and a picture of oneself. Profiles are usually dependent upon the honesty of the user, or, in some cases, the user is allowed to hide his or her real identity so that no one on the Internet can access it. In some cases, users are allowed to establish as many pseudo-profiles (or identities) as they want. Other indirect forms of communication, such as personal websites and blogs, also enable adolescents to express their identities to the Internet public and get feedback. Such a website usually has a guestbook, in which visitors can post comments to the owner of the website or blog. These may also allow adolescents to meet people who think or feel similarly.

HOW SOCIAL IS THE INTERNET?

Since the mid-1990s, there has been debate about the influence of the Internet on its users, especially with regard to loneliness. On the one hand, some researchers argue that the Internet causes loneliness because the time users spend on the Internet replaces time they would have spent in offline social activities. Despite the fact that people can communicate over the Internet, some forms of communication may not foster meaningful relationships. For example, research has shown that chat rooms may not foster meaningful relationships, because people communicate with people they do not know and probably will not meet again. There may also be a great degree of deception in chat rooms. In addition, communicating using text can make it difficult to communicate feelings and to know how other people respond to what you say. It may be difficult to get to know someone using text communication alone. Other researchers have argued that certain unique characteristics of the Internet facilitate communication and the development of relationships. For example, the Internet can facilitate deeper self-disclosure, and the inability to see each other's physical appearance may allow Internet communicators to get to know each other without the effect of physical appearance on first impressions.

Researchers today generally agree that most important is how the Internet is used. Some research provides evidence that adolescents' offline habits are translated into online activities, and that the Internet merely enhances tendencies that exist offline. So, for example, socially adept teens who have close friends are more likely to talk online with others who are their friends offline, and they are more likely to have meaningful conversations. However, when a socially inept teen goes online, he or she may engage in solitary activities such as playing games or Web surfing. If socially inept teens communicate with others, it is more likely to be with strangers, and these teens are

less likely to have deep, meaningful conversations. Parents, teachers, and counselors need to take an active interest in what adolescents are doing online and make sure to address any concerns, issues, problems that adolescents exhibit offline.

—Sean S. Seepersad

See also Chat Rooms; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use, Socialization and; Email; Instant Messaging; Internet Bulletin Boards; Personal Web Pages; Online Relationships; Webcams

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INTERNET WATCH FOUNDATION

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) is the only authorized hotline in the United Kingdom through which the public can report inadvertent exposure to illegal content on the Internet. The IWF began operation in 1997 and was formed following an agreement authorizing it to work with Internet service providers, telecommunication companies, mobile operators, software providers, the police, government, and the public to minimize the availability of child pornography online. Specifically, IWF aims to minimize the availability of potentially illegal content, such as images of child abuse, hosted anywhere in the world and, in the UK in particular, the hosting of criminally obscene and racist content.

CHILD ABUSE IMAGES

Within the United Kingdom, it is an offense or violation of child abuse laws to take, permit to be taken, make, possess, show, distribute, or advertise indecent images of children. Within these guidelines, "indecent" images are defined as depictions of children 18 years and younger involved in a sexual pose or activity. Such images of child abuse are also referred to as *child pornography, child porn, child porno,* and *kiddie porn.* The Internet Watch Foundation, working in partnership with the Internet Hotline Providers Association (INHOPE), which is a network of international hotlines, and the UK's National Crime Squad, coordinates information with Interpol and can take action against any Internet site hosting indecent or abusive images of children.

CRIMINALLY OBSCENE AND RACIST CONTENT

Although obscene content is more difficult to define in everyday terms, generally this includes images of extreme sexual activity such as rape, torture, necrophilia, and bestiality. The law on criminally racist content is clearer. It is an offense to display hatred against any group of people in Great Britain because of color, race, nationality, or ethnic origin. At this time, the IWF can take action only against criminally obscene and racist content hosted in the UK.

REPORTING ILLEGAL CONTENT

Individuals can report any potentially illegal content from almost any form of interactive media (i.e., websites, newsgroups, email) by visiting the IWF website and clicking on the "Report" button in the top right-hand corner of the web page. The reporting page also lists spam emails that have already been reported to the IWF. A report does not need to be made for an email already listed, because it has already been referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Otherwise, the report should include the kind of content being reported, a description of the content,

where the content can be found (such as a URL for a website), and contact information if the individual wishes to provide it. However, the IWF cannot take reports on content relating to chat rooms, financial scams, complaints about online auctions, legal pornography, spam, peer-to-peer, suicide websites, bomb-making websites, and instant messaging.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the IWF went into operation, the percentage of potentially illegal content hosted in the UK has decreased from 18% in 1997 to less than 1% in 2003. Reasons for its success include laws that prohibit possession or distribution of child pornography, a system designed to transfer reports from the IWF to the police for investigation, successful partnerships with the broader Internet service provider community, and an observant public who reports encounters with potentially illegal content. As a result of their work, the Sex Offences Act passed in 2003 authorizes the IWF as the only agency outside of UK law enforcement that is able to receive information about and evaluate potentially illegal content on the Internet.

—Stephanie Lee Sargent

See also Child Pornography; Internet Pornography, Effects of; Pornography, Internet; Sexualization of Children

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WEBSITE

Internet Watch Foundation: http://www.iwf.org.uk

INTERTEXTUALITY

The term *intertextuality* is well recognized among literary scholars, but only recently has its use become more common in media and marketing communications literature. Developed and popularized during the late 1960s by French literary critic, theorist, and textual analyst Julia Kristeva, *intertextuality* is defined as the passage of one (or several) sign system(s) into another. Conceptually, intertextuality is used to indicate that there are manifold ways in which any one text is inseparably inter-involved with other texts. For Kristeva, each text, which is a structure that is put together with signs to symbolize or communicate something, represents a site in which myriad other texts intersect. Thus, every text is in fact an "inter-text."

To determine the meanings generated from media messages, the concept of intertextuality suggests that the text (e.g., a television episode) should not be studied in isolation. A single episode carries an intertextual relationship with all past and future episodes of a particular television series, such that suggestive relationships exist between episodes. Specific characters and settings are likely to reappear in nearly all of the episodes; thus, no single episode can give the viewer a complete and full understanding of the television program's intended message and actual symbolic meaning. A single episode will be better understood if the viewer has exposure to other episodes from that season (the preceding episode will be particularly important for soap operas or episodes with "cliffhanger" or "to be continued" endings), and best understood if there is familiarity with a long history of the television program, its characters, and its story line. Moreover, the meaning and viewer's perceptions of an episode are likely affected and further understood through additional sources such as word-of-mouth communication (e.g., the viewer talks to friends at school about the episode that aired the previous evening) and direct experience (e.g., viewers compare the characters' experiences portrayed in one episode with their own related encounters). Such comparisons may affect whether a viewer perceives the story line as credible or reasonable.

Obvious demonstrations of intertextual relations include "cultural recycling" (quotation, plagiarism, imitation, and parody serve as palpable examples), as well as movie adaptations from novels (e.g., *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* and *Bram Stoker's Dracula*), comic books (e.g., *Spider-Man* and *Superman*), and television shows (e.g., *The Dukes of Hazzard*, *Charlie's Angels*, *The Flintstones*, and *Scooby-Doo*). Movie sequels (e.g., *Rocky* and *Star Wars*) or remakes (e.g., Gus Van Sant's *Psycho*) serve as additional illustrations, in which the follow-up is sometimes structured very much like the original.

Meanings result from an interactive, dynamic, and ongoing process between the text and the viewer or reader, whereby the receivers of media messages are actively involved. Despite the intentions of a television show's creators, for example, different viewers will not have merely one interpretation of an episode or scene. "Secondary," "tertiary," or multiple interpretations of the same text are possible, with individuals responding differently to the same textual stimuli as a result of varying personal and cultural histories. Nevertheless, the text has "dominant" or "preferred" meanings that are commonly and likely best understood by the regular viewers of the television program.

—Timothy Dewhirst

See also Media Effects; Media, Meanings of

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J

JAPAN, MEDIA IN

Japan has a vibrant media environment with a rich history, and Japanese popular culture has a growing global presence, especially among youth. In 2004, Japanese publishers released more than 74,500 books and 3,600 magazines, including manga magazines. Similar vibrancy is found in the Japanese film industry, which today includes Japanese animated films (anime). Japan has taken the lead in a number of electronic media in addition to digital broadcasting, particularly video games and mobile communications. In 2002, although Japan ranked 65th in use of the Internet through computers worldwide, it was the largest provider of Internet access through mobile phones. Mobile phones are especially popular with Japanese young people, and they are increasingly used even by elementary and junior high school students.

MEDIA HISTORY AND THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Book publishing began in the 17th century, and by the end of the 1800s, Japanese literacy neared 90%. Today, Japan claims a literacy rate of 99% and has more than 4,000 publishers and 20,000 bookshops, a number sustained by a universal pricing system for publications. Publishers are also exploring new methods of digital book delivery, such as mobile phone novels.

Like the book publishing industry, Japan's newspaper industry is flourishing. The first Japanese newspaper was published in 1862; today, Japan is the third largest newspaper market in the world, circulating 70.4 million copies daily. Six Japanese newspapers rank among the top eight in circulation worldwide, including world leader *Yomiuri Shimbun* (newspaper) with a daily circulation of more than 10 million copies for the morning edition and 4.7 million for the evening edition.

The first Japanese film was released in 1899. Documentaries and filmed stage productions dominated the early releases. Since World War II, when Japan's filmmakers began to explore new directions, the industry has had considerable success. In 1954, two films received international attention: the classic movie *The Seven Samurai*, directed by Akira Kurosawa, and the first Godzilla movie. Recently, Japanese films have attracted fans worldwide and have led to several Hollywood remakes, including versions of horror movies such as *The Ring* (Japan, 1998; United States, 2002), and increased demand for anime (Japanese animation).

The broadcast media have a much lower profile outside Japan, although a few Japanese television programs are shown on American cable stations. Japan's public broadcasting corporation, NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai), began radio broadcasts in 1925 and television broadcasts in 1953. Many of its dramas, particularly the drama *Oshin* (1983), about girl growing up and overcoming adversity in rural Japan, also have been popular in other Asian countries. Today, NHK attracts some of the largest audiences for programs on its two nationwide channels, with one channel devoted to educational programs. However, the five national broadcast corporations, as well as regional stations, are challenging NHK for market share. Most areas receive six to eight terrestrial channels, with cable and satellite systems raising the number of available channels to more than 40. In 2003, viewing time averaged 3 hours a day, although teenagers watched only 2.5 hours.

Television programs range from anime to variety programs, with all genres found on American television represented. The most popular programs tend to be dramas, sports, and variety shows. Late-night television may show partial nudity, although cable systems offer adult channels. Japan is rapidly shifting to fully digital broadcasting, which began in 2000, and will cease analog broadcasts in 2011.

YOUTH AND MOBILE CULTURE

For Japanese young people, mobile phones, called *keitai,* are more than phones. Along with other portable media devices, *keitai* promote a form of mobile privatization of public spaces. In a study of mobile phone use and cyberspace, Japanese university students reported that emailing allowed self-expression, and the phones themselves provided a site for self-presentation and allowed the students to structure their individual identities. Japan is ahead of the United States in terms of mobile phone usage for Internet and email as well as device abilities. Mobile phones are used to access cyberspace, read e-books, take photos, display video clips, and play music MP3 files and video games. Newer phones access television broadcasts, double as scanners, and include GPS locators and navigation systems. Surveys indicate that 75% of Japanese use mobile phones. The highest usage is by high school and university students, more than 90% of whom use mobile phones. Just over 56% of young teenage girls and 25% of all elementary and junior high school students have mobile phones, although this market is growing rapidly. Although there are arguments about use of mobile phones by young people, recent increases in crimes against young people have led parents to purchase phones with GPS locators and automatic signaling devices to keep track of their children. The range of styles and designs, in addition to the mobile phones' features, allow consumers to select devices that both meet their needs and display their identities.

GLOBAL IMPACT OF JAPANESE MEDIA

Japanese popular culture has a growing world presence, particularly in Asia. Although anime (animated films and television series) and manga (Japanese comics or graphic novels) are the best known cultural exports, other Japanese cultural products, from Hello Kitty character goods to J-Pop (Japanese popular music), are widely popular throughout Asia. Exports of Japanese media products, particularly anime and video games, have risen steadily since the 1980s. Japanese anime account for about 60% of the world market, although the problem of piracy makes it hard to get an accurate figure, and outsourcing of production by Japanese anime studios has created an international production system. Video games tied to anime have driven the handheld game market since the mid-1980s. Popular video games are marketed for multiple platforms. The growing popularity of Japanese popular culture in Asia, particularly among young people, is both a business opportunity for Japanese media industries and part of the dynamics of the creation of a "dream world" for Japanese and Asian imaginations. The availability of Japanese cultural products as well as media and communication technology is linked by some to the products' lack of any specific identification with Japan, although others connect it to the embodiment of a Japanese aesthetic.

—Tamara Swenson

See also Anime; Manga (Japanese Comic Books); Internet Use, International

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K

KAISER FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Kaiser Family Foundation is a nonprofit, independent operating foundation that provides information and analysis on health-care issues to policymakers, journalists, the health-care community, and the general public.

MEDIA RESEARCH

In 1997, the foundation (which is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries) launched a new program area to conduct original research on entertainment media and health, focusing especially on children and media. The foundation's work in this area primarily involves large-scale, nationally representative research, including regularly updated studies on media use among children and teens; content analyses of sexual messages on television; and national surveys of parents concerning children and media. The foundation takes no advocacy position on media-related policy issues; instead, it attempts to provide basic research to help inform the policymaking process, journalists, advocates, and parents. In addition, the foundation provides its research directly to the media industry, maintaining an ongoing dialogue with writers, producers, and executives. Whereas some of the foundation's media studies are published in peer-reviewed journals such as *Journal of the American Medical Association* and *Health Affairs*, others are published and disseminated publicly by the foundation as a means of expediting the process and reaching a wider popular audience. The foundation is not a grant-making organization. Research is conceived and developed in house, and contracts are established with outside collaborators from universities or research firms.

HEALTH COMMUNICATION

The foundation also conducts extensive health communications campaigns for youth in partnership with media companies such as Viacom, MTV, BET, UPN, and Univision on HIV/AIDS prevention and other related topics. These Emmy award-winning, partnership-based campaigns have created a new model of health communication based on social marketing concepts. Under this model, Kaiser and the media company enter into an agreement in which Kaiser's contributions are issues research, briefings for writers and producers, substantive guidance on message development, and funds to support program production and informational resources. The media partner contributes creative and communications expertise, on-air programming, and guaranteed placement of public service ads and other content to reach target audiences. The campaigns include a combination of public service announcements (PSAs), full-length special programming, story lines in entertainment shows, and online content. Kaiser is now expanding this work globally by working with some of the largest media companies in the world to undertake new initiatives in Russia and India. In 1999, the foundation helped launch the *loveLife* program, South Africa's largest HIV prevention program for youth, which includes a highly visible, national, multimedia HIV education

and awareness campaign along with on-the-ground services.

—Vicky Rideout

See also Media Effects, History of Research on; Research Methods, Questionnaires and Surveys

WEBSITE

Kaiser Family Foundation: www.kff.org

KNOWLEDGE GAP

The term *knowledge gap* refers to the hypothesis that, in societies where information flows (via the media) increase, people with higher levels of education tend to acquire this information at a faster rate than people with lower levels of education, with the consequence that, as social power is partly based on knowledge, growing differences in knowledge may lead to growing differences in power. Research into the knowledge gap is generally cited as beginning in 1970 with the work of Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien. Reconsidering this general hypothesis in 1975, Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien introduced modifications to the original postulation based on issue generality, level of social conflict, and size and homogeneity of the community.

Implicitly, the theory can be applied to all age groups. However, relatively few studies have explicitly studied knowledge gaps among children and adolescents, although a few early studies such as that by Cook and colleagues discussed whether the TV program *Sesame Street* narrowed or widened achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children.

Today, the knowledge gap hypothesis has been reframed to focus more broadly on the impact of digital technology, and the discussion is more likely to refer to the *digital divide*. The digital divide hypothesis has undeniably given a substantial renewed boost to empirical research into the ways in which information and communication media may create, recreate, reinforce, or even destroy existing socioeconomic and power differentials—a concern that was at the core of the initial knowledge gap hypothesis.

In her extensive review of the research up to that point, Gaziano noted in 1983 that the meaning of *knowledge gap* varies in the literature. It can refer to gaps found at one point in time, gaps that occur and change in magnitude over time, gaps between education and knowledge without reference to the media, and gaps dependent on media exposure. The knowledge gap hypothesis is based on four variables: (1) level of mass media publicity in a particular social setting, (2) level of individuals' education, (3) the level of their knowledge, and (4) time. After reviewing 58 studies, Gaziano concluded that, although a great deal of empirical evidence for knowledge gaps existed, little was known about the role of the media in this respect because very little research had included mass media coverage of news and issues as a variable.

In addition to studies in political communication, investigation of the knowledge gap hypothesis was also quickly taken up within the field of health communication, especially with respect to the effectiveness of health promotion campaigns. Studies here have further refined the initial hypothesis by stressing the importance of mediating factors such as interest, motivation, group membership, and information functionality.

Almost from the beginning, the association of knowledge gaps with levels of education provoked controversy because, critics claimed, it implied that less educated people were in some way inferior or deficient in ability. Consequently, some studies have redirected the focus of research toward a perspective emphasizing *power gaps* rather than knowledge gaps and stressing the potential role of media advocacy and empowerment within socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

Although studies continued to appear sporadically, empirical interest in the knowledge gap hypothesis waned somewhat in the 1990s, as other issues surrounding media effects and political participation gained precedence. However, toward the end of the decade, the arrival of the Internet and its manifestly uneven levels of adoption and use in different sociodemographic groups gave a fresh impulse to the notion of widening information-related knowledge gaps. At first, researchers attempted to fit the Internet into traditional knowledge gap approaches by stressing the differences between the "haves" and the "have nots." However, as the Internet diffused rapidly through society and was joined by other elements of what has come to be termed the "information society," this traditional approach was complemented by increasing theoretical and empirical attention to the novel and

unique elements of digital technology, with the result that contemporary discourse has come to be framed more in terms of a digital divide than a knowledge gap.

Although more than a mere extension of the knowledge gap hypothesis, digital divide research shares not only many of its assumptions (e.g., growing economic and power differentials) but also many of its theoretical and methodological shortcomings: lack of rigorous conceptual definition and coherent theory, lack of interdisciplinarity, and lack of an extensive cumulative body of research on nonusers of information technology and, in particular, the reasons for and consequences of their nonuse.

—Keith Roe

See also Computer Use, International; Digital Divide; Digital Literacy; Internet Use, International; Media Education, International; Media Literacy Programs; World Summits on Children and Television

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Encyclopedia of Children, Adolescents, and the Media

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2

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A SAGE Reference Publication

SAGE Publications
Thousand Oaks ▪ London ▪ New Delhi

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LANGUAGE, IMPACT OF THE INTERNET ON

The Internet is a visual medium that uses a mixture of text, images, and sound. Its communication applications, such as email, instant messaging, and chat rooms, are especially popular among youth. These younger users seem to be adapting to the unique demands of online communicative environments by creating a chat code of their own. Research has begun to document the features of this chat code and suggests that users are creating this code by adapting strategies from oral and written contexts. Concerns have been raised that the use of this chat code will transfer to conventional forms of oral and written discourse and, just as important, may enable youth to shut parents and other adults out of their world.

FEATURES OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION

First and foremost, online communication occurs in an environment that is devoid of face-to-face cues such as eye contact, gaze, body orientation, and gesture. Second, although it takes place in the written medium, online communication is like spoken language, particularly unplanned speech, in that it typically consists of shorter, incomplete, grammatically simple, and even incorrect sentences. Furthermore, research suggests that users omit copulas, subject pronouns, and articles. Thus, it appears that the language used on the Internet (also called *Netspeak*) may be an amalgam of written and spoken language—a register of written language with many of the stylistic features of spoken language. The spontaneous conversational contexts of most online communication present conditions that push this written medium in the direction of oral language characteristics.

FEATURES OF ONLINE CHAT CODES

Ethnographic investigation of online teen chat rooms suggests that users are creating this chat code by utilizing the resources of oral and written English in creative ways. Some codes specific to chat rooms include the distinctive visual appearance of nicknames created by combining letters and numerals in creative ways (e.g., MizRose7, MORN8SUN); the request for numerals to identify interested conversation partners (press 14 if ya wanna chat 2 a 14/f/cali); the use of a standard graphic format to reveal identity information (17/m/fl, which stands for "17-year-old male from Florida") and the ubiquitous a/s/l (age/sex/location) code.

Anecdotal reports suggest that the same process is occurring with regard to the language codes that are being created and used in instant messaging conversations. For instance, common utterances such as *r u there* (are you there?), *brb* (be right back), and *pos* (parent over shoulder) highlight the pressure toward brevity to approximate the timing of oral discourse but within a written context.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHAT CODE

Reports from researchers and media alike suggest that younger users are creating and using the code as they adapt to each new technology. This is not surprising, given that younger people are generally at the vanguard

of cultural innovations, and this has certainly been the case with language changes in the computer medium. One implication of this is that children and teenagers are more adept at this code than their parents and can use it to mask the true nature of their online activities from their parents. A related concern is children and adolescents who are growing up using this code will think nothing of using it in written forms of discourse, where such language is inappropriate.

—Kaveri Subrahmanyam and Patricia Greenfield

See also Chat Rooms, Social and Linguistic Processes in; Email; Instant Messaging; Internet Relay Chat (IRC); Mobile Telephones

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LANGUAGE, PROFANITY IN

See PROFANITY, TRENDS IN

LANGUAGE LEARNING, TELEVISION AND

To fully address the issue of television and language learning, we must consider at the very least what is meant by language development, as well as the age of the child who is attempting to learn from television. First, language learning might be divided into two broad categories, *grammatical development* and *lexical development*. Furthermore, we might also distinguish between *initial language learning* and *vocabulary extension*, the latter being a process that continues throughout life.

Overall, it appears that television can teach language in some real but limited ways. Children—and, indeed, adults—can learn new words and extend their vocabularies. However, the complexity of grammar is difficult to parse from speech—especially speech of the kind that one garners from television. After all, there is no interaction per se, and the speaker can not arrange his or her grammar to best suit the needs of the listener. Lastly, television does not appear to be able to teach initial words to toddlers.

Most research that examines preschoolers between the ages of 2 and 5 years has shown that young children can in fact acquire new words by watching television. For example, in a series of laboratory studies, Rice and colleagues showed preschoolers animated programs that contained infrequently used words (e.g., *gramophone*). After seeing the clip twice in the span of a week, children who saw it performed significantly better when matching the word with a picture than did control children who had not seen the clip. On average, 5-year-olds learned more than 3-year-olds.

In a similar study by Singer and Singer, children who attended a child-care program were randomly assigned either to watch 10 episodes of *Barney* or to engage in free play in another room at the facility, over a 2-week period. Prior to exposure, children were pretested on vocabulary words that would appear in *Barney.* After the exposure period, children were tested again. Children who had seen *Barney* performed significantly better than those in the control group on their knowledge of words used in the *Barney* episode.

There is also evidence from longitudinal studies, the designs of which offer greater external validity. Rice and colleagues examined the vocabulary growth of children over a 2 ½-year period. Children who watched *Sesame Street* more frequently experienced greater vocabulary growth even when parent education and initial vocabulary scores were controlled for. However, this finding was only true of children who were 3 years old at the beginning of the study; 5-year-olds did not make such extensive gains. Therefore, it appears from both experimental designs and longitudinal survey research that preschoolers can, in fact, learn new words from television.

However, it appears that children do not effectively learn grammar from television. Although the data here are not as robust, due to difficulties in data collection on this issue, correlational research studies that have examined grammatical development have found that exposure to television is negatively correlated with grammatical development. Language acquisition experts suggest that human interaction in which the learner is part of the dyad may be the only way to access the complexity of grammar.

Finally, most research using both experimental and survey design has focused only on the ability of television to teach *new* words to children—not to teach them *initial* words. That is, studies look at long-term vocabulary extension of children who are older (3 years of age or older) and who therefore have relatively extensive productive and receptive vocabularies. The process of learning new words is not identical to that of learning initial words. In the latter case, very young children must learn what words are; must understand that they can refer to objects, concepts, and ideas; and must learn to identify a word as belonging to the category of noun, adjective, or verb. In other words, initial language acquisition is a more complex process than later vocabulary extension. With the popularity of programs (e.g., *Teletubbies, Baby Einstein*) now targeting preverbal children, it may well be important to understand the impact of these programs on initial language acquisition. However, there is a dearth of studies examining this topic. However, in one study, Krcmar and colleagues examined the ability of toddlers (aged 12 to 24 months) to learn new words from *Teletubbies*. Using the fast mapping paradigm and a clip from *Teletubbies* with an edited voice-over, the authors found that, until children were approximately 20 months of age, they were able to learn novel words only from a live, adult speaker—and not from the adult speaker on videotape or from the dubbed *Teletubbies* clip. This suggests that very young children cannot learn initial words from television until they are almost 2 years old.

So, can television teach language to children? Perhaps the best answer is this: Television teaches words, not language, which is best learned through human interaction.

—Marina Krcmar

See also Infants and Toddlers, Developmental Needs of; Infants and Toddlers, Media Exposure of; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and; Media Literacy, Approaches to; Reading, Literacy and; Reading, Patterns of; Television, Attention and; Television, Viewer Age and

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LATIN AMERICA, MEDIA USE IN

Latin America is a diverse region with varying degrees of media development. Although Latin American media systems are dedicated to producing content that is inherently "Latin," the development of the systems has followed a commercial North American model, with various levels of direct U.S. investment in particular systems (Sinclair, 2004). The major producers of Latin American programming are Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela, with significant domestic production and distribution as well as extensive exportation around the globe.

Children in Latin America, like other children around the world, spend a considerable amount of time using mass media, especially television. The concerns about television and children in Latin America are the same concerns faced by North Americans. On average, children are watching television about 3 hours per day, and nearly 45% of children have television sets in their bedrooms. More than 40% of Latin American children watch television alone, especially as they age (Meirelles, 2005). According to the Pan Latin American Kids Survey, conducted in 1998, 45% of people agree that there is too much sex on TV, and 55% believe there is too much violence ("Sex & Violence," www.zonalatina.com).

According to a survey conducted in Latin America in 2002, television is the main source of entertainment for 34% of children ages 12 to 19. Radio usage varies between boys and girls, with 23% of boys naming radio as a main source of entertainment, whereas 35% of girls use the radio most ("Media as the Main Sources of Entertainment," www.zonalatina.com). Most households in Latin America have access to both radio and television; in some rural areas, access to television is more common than access to a telephone.

MASS MEDIA IN MEXICO, BRAZIL, AND VENEZUELA

Mexico

Grupo Televisa is the largest and most influential media conglomerate in Mexico, controlling television networks, magazines, newspapers, and other mass media. Televisa's popularity was unchallenged during the 1970s and 1980s, when on any given evening 90% of the television audience watched one of the four Televisa channels.

Televisa provides children's programming under the Televisa Niños brand, the line-up of which is filled by domestic productions. One of the most popular programs is *El Chavo del Ocho,* a live-action sitcom, which has been on the air for 35 years. It targets children 6 to11 years old and is shown throughout Latin America as well as on Spanish-language television in the United States. *Plaza Sésamo,* the Mexican version of *Sesame Street,* is a co-production of Televisa and Sesame Workshop and targets a preschool audience. Other programming for children on Televisa includes *telenovelas*, drama serials that use the soap opera form but are tailored to audience members aged 6 to 12. In addition, *Señal Tu* is a radio program in Mexico created by kids for kids and distributed through the Televisa radio network; it provides news, information, and gossip about favorite celebrities.

In 1993, TV Azteca entered the Mexican marketplace after acquiring two government-operated channels. Since that time, TV Azteca has increased its audience share to nearly 30% of the prime-time audience by providing alternative programming to that of Televisa (Sinclair, 2004). While TV Azteca does some of its own production for adult entertainment and news, it relies more heavily on imports for its children's programming, especially Disney. TV Azteca's Channel 7 includes the *Disney Club*, which showcases *Lilo y Stitch* and other programs highlighting the Disney brand.

Brazil

Rede Globo has had a near-monopoly of the Brazilian media since the 1960s, when Roberto Marinho established the network with investment from the U.S.-based Time-Life Corporation. Currently, the most popular genre of programming through the

television arm of Rede Globo is the telenovela. TV Globo has extensive production facilities, in which nearly all of its programming is produced. Like Mexico's Televisa, Globo has become a major exporter of telenovelas to Portugal and, by dubbing their programs into Spanish, to other Latin American countries as well as to the United States.

Children's programs on TV Globo include *Disney en TV,* which features Disney programs dubbed into Portuguese. TV Globo dedicates about 10% of its programming to children, usually in the morning between 9:30 and 12:00. A popular program is *TV XuXa,* a live-action variety show in which the host, Keka, leads children on different adventures. TVE Brasil, a public station based in Rio de Janeiro, has programming for children in the morning from 10:00 until noon and later between 1 and 6 p.m., for a total of 5 hours of programming per day. Some programs are domestic productions and include *A Turma do Perere,* a program that teaches children about Brazilian folklore, and *Castelo Rá-tim-Bum,* an educational program targeted to 4-to-8-year-olds that features math and science lessons. The public channel also airs shows imported from PBS in the United States, such as *Caillou* and *Zoboomafoo* (Leite, 2005).

Venezuela

Although Venezuela is a smaller media market than either Mexico or Brazil, the system is also dominated by a single broadcaster, Venevisión, founded in 1960 by Diego Cisneros. Venevisión is not the only choice in Venezuela, but it does attract the widest audiences with its telenovelas and news programming. Children's programming on Venevisión includes *El Chavo de Ocho* from Mexico and Disney shows such as *Lizzie McGuire.* A Venezuelan production, *Atómico,* is a children's variety show broadcast from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday on the network.

In addition to national networks, both Televisa and Venevisión own part of Univisión, the largest Spanish-language network in the United States, which provides children's programming for Spanish-speaking audiences in the United States. Although Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela provide some national children's television programming, there is a lack of diversity and few choices for children who do not have access to direct-to-home satellite networks.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING ON CABLE AND SATELLITE CHANNELS

Access to cable and satellite channels has increased across Latin America, making more television programming available for adults as well as children. Of the 103.4 million people in Mexico, 96% of the population have access to television in the home, and about 14% have cable, whereas 4.5% subscribe to direct-to-home satellite systems. Of the 176 million Brazilians, 88% have access to television in the home, 9% subscribe to cable, and another 4.2% have direct-to-home satellite television. In Venezuela, of the population of 24.3 million, 96% have access to television in the home, 20% have access to cable, and close to 6% have access to satellite channels (www.worldscreen.com).

The international children's television landscape is mimicking adult network expansion as networks expand to make programming available in countries around the world. Not only is CNN international, Disney and Nickelodeon are as well. Of cable channels in Latin America, the most popular is the Disney Channel, followed by the Cartoon Network and Discovery Kids, with Nickelodeon coming in sixth, demonstrating that families with cable use it for access to children's programming. The Disney Channel has been successful in its international expansion by marketing the Disney brand and dubbing its programs and movies into Spanish and Portuguese for distribution throughout Latin America. In Brazil, however, the Disney Channel ranks 17th, and the Cartoon Network holds the number one spot. Mexican television households also rank the Cartoon Network first, with the Disney Channel coming in second, according to IBOPE cable household ratings. Although not yet as popular as other networks, Nickelodeon is quickly penetrating Latin American markets by launching networks in a variety of countries by dubbing their programs into Spanish and Portuguese. Some of the Nickelodeon programs that have been featured around the globe include *Rugrats, Blue's Clues,* and *SpongeBob SquarePants.*

MTV Latin America, owned by Viacom (the same corporation that owns Nickelodeon) appeals to young audiences by including North American and Latin American artists on the channel. The localization strategy of MTV is to appeal to the domestic audience by including local on-air personalities with whom the audience can identify. In Brazil, Viacom has established

Viacom Networks Brasil, which includes VH1 in Portuguese and is customized for Brazilian viewers. It also operates existing businesses in the market, such as MTV. In Brazil, MTV receives 38% of all advertising revenue aimed at teenagers (Leite, 2005).

AOL/Time Warner's Cartoon Network has been expanding globally as well, with specific channels in Europe, Latin America, and Japan. The Cartoon Network offers the same programming available on all of its international networks but dubs in the domestic language. Many of the programs originate in Japan and the United States and include *Teen Titans, Ed, Edd n Eddy,* and *Powerpuff Girls.* The cartoon genre is particularly popular with children and has proven to be a successful export. Changing the language of animated characters is easier and less expensive than with live action.

Disney has been an international brand almost since its inception. In the current marketplace, it is not slowing down in terms of international recognition and has also increased its viewer numbers through product marketing. The Disney Channel is available through 13 specialized international channels, including channels in Germany, Latin America, and the Middle East. It has 20 million international network subscribers. Disney children's programming, however, does not end with the Disney Channel. Fox Kids Europe has 33 million subscribers, and Fox Kids Latin America has 14.3 million subscribers; these are both Disney companies. Some current popular Disney programming includes *Lilo & Stitch, Lizzie McGuire,* and the *Digimon* series, which Disney acquired through its agreement with Saban Entertainment, a Japanese company.

The availability of international children's networks does not necessarily mean that this type of programming is what the audience prefers, but the ease of dubbing makes it possible to localize a program seamlessly in a way that eliminates its foreignness. In this way, most children's television programming becomes transparent text that appeals to an audience in any cultural context. Although local audiences prefer local programming, children do not necessarily view cartoons created in the United States or Japan as foreign.

THE IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA

Critics question the impact of foreign imports from the United States and Japan on the cultural values of children in Latin America, where access is not limited to international networks but through single and block program sales to domestic broadcasters. Children, in particular, may be more susceptible to the influence of television than teens or adults due to their cognitive development stages, during which children are constantly learning about themselves and others in their social and cultural environment. Local culture is intertwined with global culture; children from around the world share the same interests, watch the same programming, play the same games, and share in the media preferences available in their living rooms, which create spaces for the negotiation of identity based on exposure to both global and local influences.

In addition, there is growing concern about the impact of advertising on children's values, including increased materialism. A full 54% of children in Latin America aged 7 to 11 agreed with the statement, "I love to watch ads on television," and when separated by country, 58% of Mexican children, 48% of Brazilian children, and 71% of Venezuelan children love to watch ads. Commercialization is not new to the mass media in these countries, as many use a commercial model. The new concern, however, is advertisements for North American products and the perception that these products are better. Of children who agree that they "love to watch ads on television," 53% agree that "North American products are better" ("TV Advertising and Children in Latin America"). In addition, there has been recent attention to the relationship between television viewing and obesity, especially in urban areas of Latin America, where heavy television viewing is correlated to obesity because of the displacement of other activities ("Television = Obesity?").

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

It is widely accepted that television can be used as an educational tool throughout Latin America. Castro (2004) explains that educational or prosocial messages should be salient throughout the program and appropriate for the target audience. If used properly, such messages can be advantageous for marginalized groups, especially children who may not have access to public education.

An example of an educational program is the coproduction of Televisa in Mexico and Children's Television Workshop (now Sesame Workshop), resulting in *Plaza Sésamo* as an adaptation of *Sesame Street.* In the early 1970s, a production team from Mexico was the first to truly change the look and content of *Sesame Street* to promote specific values of the

Mexican culture. Since *Plaza Sésamo* is shown in other Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, special consideration was taken to ensure that it would appeal to a diverse audience of children. The aim of the *Plaza Sésamo* production team was to create 130 half-hour episodes entirely in Spanish under the guidance of the Latin American research and production team. Today, each program is created through the co-production process: approximately half the episode consists of original productions filmed in Mexico City, and the other half is composed of short scenes that are considered by the Workshop as culturally neutral, that is, not having any exclusively American values or symbols, such as coins, the flag, or historical figures. *Plaza Sésamo* can be seen throughout Latin America.

THE TELENOVELA

The *telenovela* (soap opera) is the most popular programming genre for Latin American audiences; telenovelas are created for all audience segments. They differ from the daytime soap operas popular in the United States because telenovelas have endings, usually after about 150 hour-long episodes. The most popular are broadcast Monday through Friday during prime time and appeal to a broad general audience. During the day, telenovelas are targeted toward children up to age 12. The early-evening telenovela is reserved for the teenage audience, with more adult-themed novelas broadcast between 8 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Telenovela viewing is indeed popular with children, with 29% of those under 12 watching telenovelas alone or with their mothers. In fact, 41% of Latin Americans think telenovela viewing is an activity for the whole family, whereas 40% agree that viewing can unite the family (Gonzalez, 1993).

Telenovelas aimed at children usually feature child actors as the primary characters and involve story lines that are appropriate for the audience, focusing on school and family issues. In Mexico, telenovelas for children have proven to be successful, enjoying high ratings during the afternoon broadcasts on Televisa. The primary audience for these programs are 6-to-12-year-olds, who enjoy, for example, *Amy la Niña de la Mochila Azul* (*Amy, the Girl with the Blue Backpack*) and *Sueños y Caramelos* (*Dreams and Candies*). Teen telenovelas revolve around topics relevant to that age group and include discussions of intimate relationships, drug use, and peer pressure. Often, telenovelas will incorporate prosocial messages to reach teenagers in ways that are less obtrusive than other educational sources. Miguel Sabido, who became a telenovela producer at Televisa during the 1970s, designed the entertainment-education approach in Mexico. Use of the telenovela genre has proven to be an effective method of incorporating messages for all age groups, but particularly teens.

When considering preferences in television viewing, 89% of children across Latin America choose cartoons as their favorite type of television programming, with movies coming in second at 52%. Telenovelas are listed as a favorite genre for 60% of girls and about 28% of boys ages 7 to 11. Gender differences can also be found for other popular genres; nearly 40% of boys choose action-adventure, and about 25% of girls cite it as a genre they like to watch. Some 50% of boys ages 7 to 11 like to watch sports on television, whereas fewer than 20% of girls say they watch sports programming ("Favorite Television Programs," www.zonalatina.com/ZIdata167).

MOVIES

In addition to watching television, Latin American children enjoy watching movies, which are often imported from the United States. The global film market is dominated by Hollywood productions. When Latin Americans were given a choice among Hollywood movies, movies from their own country, movies from other Latin American countries, and movies from Europe, 78% of teenage males said they preferred Hollywood films, as did 79% of females. When the survey respondents were separated by country, 85% of Brazilians, 71% of Venezuelans, and 66% of Mexicans preferred Hollywood films. The lower numbers in Mexico may be due to the recent popularity and international success of Mexican movies such as *Amores Perros* and *Y Tú Máma También.*

MUSIC

Music in Latin America, as in most regions of the world, inspires youth culture because musicians are able to use music as a vehicle of free expression by working outside the constraints of other mass media. Musical traditions in the region are a mix of sounds from the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, creating such genres as samba, tango, mambo, and salsa. During the 1970s, young people embraced salsa music as the musical sound of Latin

America (Berrios-Miranda, 2004). As Latin Americans migrated to other parts of the world, the sounds and music traveled with them. Popular salsa artists include Tito Puente and Celia Cruz, who have captured the attention of salsa fans worldwide.

Rock en español is the blending of various musical forms from Latin America with the harder rock sounds of the North. The genre began in the early 1960s, which coincided with the modernization of many Latin American cities as well as the commercial development of other media forms. Much of the rock en español produced during the 1970s was a subversive voice against oppressive governments throughout the region; teenagers have been attracted to this musical genre because of the freedom to express alternative political views. Contemporary rock en español has found audiences of Latina/os in the United States and has gained much attention, especially in the border regions (Kun, 2002).

Popular Latin American musicians have found success in the North American market by appealing to audiences eager to listen to what has been called the "Latin explosion." Youth in the United States embraced such Latin American singers as Gloria Estefan in the 1980s and Ricky Martin and Marc Anthony in the 1990s, each of whom records albums in Spanish and English to appeal to audiences throughout the Americas. Bilingual singers are not new, but the intense marketing of Latina/os is now seen as an effective way to sell more records.

MAGAZINES

The magazine industry in Latin America is characterized by audience segmentation, whereby many magazines appeal to specific audience interests. Pan-regional magazines appeal to broad general audiences throughout Latin America and focus on news and finance. Spanish-language versions of American magazines such as *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan* attract young female readers, while *Maxim,* also an American magazine, attracts young men. These and other American magazines are available in many countries.

Mexico has a wide variety of magazines appealing to every interest, including magazines published for children and teenagers. Two examples from Mexico include *El Cienpiés,* which features trivia, activities, and other information for young children, and *Eres,* which targets teenage girls with celebrity gossip and advice columns. *Artrevida* is a Brazilian magazine targeted to teenage girls, with celebrity news, advice columns, and fashion tips. Another magazine for teens is *Capricho,* which has a more "alternative" feel and focuses on music, celebrity news, and fashion. Teenagers are also attracted to adult fashion, gossip, and sports magazines. Current information about the use of magazines by young people in Latin America is unavailable.

INTERNET

Internet use in Latin American countries varies according to technological availability and access to computers. Young people who do have access through home or school are embracing the Internet, making Latin America the fastest-growing Internet market in the world, with a 19% increase in users from 2004 to 2005. As of September 2005, 16.4% of the population in Mexico were regular Internet users; in Brazil, 12.3% of people use the technology. In fact, Brazil and Mexico account for 57% of all users in Latin America (Internet World Statistics, www.internetworldstats.com). Popular activities online include shopping, downloading music, and instant messaging. Of teenagers using the Internet, 47% of males and 36% of females download music on a regular basis ("Downloading Music," www.zonalatina.com/Z1data241). Teenagers use the Internet for instant messaging ("Instant Messaging," www.zonalatina.com/Z1data225.htm) and other forms of mediated interpersonal communication.

Websites are available for Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking children. Nearly all the domestic television programs have associated websites featuring games for children to play online. Nickelodeon, Disney, and the Cartoon Network also have Spanish and Portuguese web pages that allow Latin American children to form interactive relationships with the characters. As the availability and popularity of the Internet becomes more widespread, young people will undoubtedly spend more time online. As this happens, concern intensifies about access to inappropriate material and use of the technology by pedophiles to gain access to children.

Children in Latin America spend a significant amount of time using mass media to be entertained, educated, and informed. Although there are varying degrees of development throughout the region, one common denominator among children throughout

Latin America, and indeed the world, is that they watch television. Although international children's networks are expanding, domestic channels that provide local or foreign programs are still the most commonly watched by Latin American children. The behavioral and social effects of exposure to media sex, violence, and advertising are of concern to Latin Americans, as are the consequences of exposure to foreign cultural values originating in the United States.

—Kristin C. Moran

See also Electronic Games, International; Entertainment-Education, International; Globalization, Media and; International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth, and Media; Internet Use, International; Latina/os, Media Use by; Radio, International; Television, International Viewing Patterns and

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LATINA/OS, MEDIA EFFECTS ON

The underrepresentation of Latinos and Latinas in the media and their overrepresentation among consumers of media have led to concern that Latina/o youth may be at particular risk for media influence. However, there are only a few empirical studies that examine the

impact of media on Latina/o youth. The research studies that have been conducted explore the role of media on Latina/o viewers' self-perceptions, focusing on self-esteem, ethnic identity, and body image. Another set of studies has examined connections between Latino youth's media use and their attitudes and belief systems, including ideas about gender and academic achievement. Finally, there have been studies to determine the influence of media on the health concerns of Latina/o adolescents.

Concern has arisen that the absence of Latina/o media personalities and repeated exposure to stereotypical portrayals of Latina/os may lead viewers to believe that these attributes characterize Latina/os in the real world. It is believed that heavy media use will cause Latina/o viewers to believe that Latina/os are inferior and that being a Latina/o is bad, thereby diminishing self-esteem. However, empirical evidence has not substantiated this hypothesized connection. Subervi-Velez and Necochea found that Latina/o children's general viewing amounts were only mildly related to their self-esteem, and in a positive direction. Therefore, Latina/o children who watched more English-language television had a more elevated self-esteem. Surprisingly, watching Spanish-language television was not related to the children's self-esteem.

Others have raised concerns over the influence of these media images on the ethnic identity of Latina/o youth. Although no published study has directly linked media use with the ethnic identity of Latina/o children and adolescents, studies have examined other relevant issues, such as acculturation. Studies have found a consistent relationship between media use and acculturation. Research with Latina/o adolescents has shown that those who are less acculturated use Spanish-language media to a greater extent. In addition, watching English-language television increases the acculturation level among newer Latina/o immigrants. Another set of studies has examined the links between media use and perceptions of Latina/o media personalities. Findings indicate that, when Latina/os watch more television, they are less likely to rate the televised depictions of Latina/o characters as fair. This result is consistent with the finding of Children Now that Latina/o children perceived that minority characters were underrepresented and more likely to be cast in negative roles than European American characters. This set of studies establishes a connection between Latina/o youth's media use and their feelings about their ethnic group and identity.

Other analyses of how media use shapes the self-conceptions of Latina/o youth have focused on issues of body image and body satisfaction. Focus group studies have explored Latina college students' perceptions of magazines' images and found that participants preferred a body ideal that corresponded with the ultra-thin media ideal and pursued this ideal through diet, exercise, and some unhealthy practices. Although the late adolescents emphasized their own cultural ideals and were aware that physical differences due to their ethnicity excluded them from attaining the mainstream media ideal, some were still unable to resist the negative impact on their self-image. A number of participants identified magazines as the most influential sources for body image ideals. Although these focus group results are informative, these connections have yet to be supported by survey data. Jane, Hunter, and Lozzi's survey of 87 Cuban American women aged 18 to 25 years found that neither amount of television nor amount of magazine exposure was a significant predictor of beliefs and attitudes associated with eating disorders. Thus, from these findings a mixed picture emerges, one in which Latinas speak of mainstream media ideals influencing their body image attitudes and behavior, even though their media exposure levels have not been found to be associated with these outcomes in any published work.

In addition to examining the role of media on the self-perceptions of Latina/o youth, a small number of studies have investigated the effect of media on the attitudes of Latina/o children and adolescents. One set of studies has examined gender-role norms. Experimental studies with Latina/o children found that exposing children to stereotypical or nonstereotypical gender occupations on television influenced their own ideas about gendered occupational roles and their own career aspirations. Those who viewed men and women in gender-typed occupations had more stringent ideas about the occupational roles of men and women, indicating that televised portrayals could affect ideas about gender and career choices. A more current study conducted by Rivadeneyra and Ward with Latina/o high school students found that greater levels of exposure to English- and Spanish-language television programming and the perception of television content as realistic were associated with more traditional views about gender roles. These connections remained even when acculturation level and generational status were taken into account. However, these relationships were only found with the girls in

the study and did not exist with the boys, indicating a gender difference in the link between media use and gender-role attitudes.

Two published studies have also looked at the role of media use on the academic outcomes of Latina/o adolescents. An early study by Tan and colleagues found connections between media use and the grade point average of Latina/o high school students. Those who read newspapers were more likely to have a higher grade point average. On the other hand, those who watched television for entertainment were more likely to have a lower grade point average. More current research by the same author found that watching American television was related to higher educational aspirations among ninth-grade Latina/os. The authors suggest that viewing English-language television may help Latina/o immigrants understand U.S. culture, and therefore they may become more savvy educational consumers.

Finally, the impact of media use on health-related behaviors has also been examined with Latina/o youth. As with other ethnic groups, connections have been found between receptivity to pro-tobacco media and tobacco use among Latino adolescents. However, Latina/os, along with other ethnic minority groups, are less receptive to these messages than are European American adolescents. Program evaluation studies of media literacy programs have found that these can deter the initiation of cigarette use, the experimental use of marijuana, and the initiation of alcohol drinking and binge drinking among Latino middle school students.

—Rocío Rivadeneyra

See also Advertising, Ethnicity/Race in; Body Image, Ethnicity/Race and; Children Now; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in; Immigrants, Media Use by; Latin America, Media Use in; Latina/os, Media Images of; Latina/os, Media Use by

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LATINA/OS, MEDIA IMAGES OF

In the United States context, the terms *Latino* and *Latina* describe people who trace their ancestry to nations and cultures in Latin America. Media images construct meaning about Latina/os through visual representation. While Latina/os make up a significant and historically situated population in the United States, entertainment and news media typically neglect to include them in stories and images. Historically, the relatively few images in general market media marginalize and stereotype Latina/os. Although negative and stereotypical images persist, more recent celebrations of Latina/o stars and styles provide positive imagery in popular culture as Latina/os become incorporated into the American mainstream, fueled in part by 2000 U.S. Census reports that Latina/os make up more than 13% of the total U.S. population, surpassing African Americans as the second-largest ethnic or racial group after whites. Spanish-language radio and television programs are common throughout the

United States, with many shows catering to children. Contemporary media texts in Spanish directed at children work within the representational strategies of multiculturalism and present more visible and positive images of Latina/os than might be found in general market media.

Because Latina/os constitute a large and linguistically, culturally, and racially diverse group, media images do much to create a coherent notion of Latina/o identity and solidarity, which is referred to as *Latinidad.* As media audiences, children learn about Latina/os and about the nature of Latinidad through media images, and these images become part of the negotiation and formation of identity for Latina/o children. Persistent negative stereotypes in entertainment and news media can influence how children construct meanings about themselves and others and encourage bias and racism. Positive images in children's media, such as the characters Dora and Diego in the popular Nickelodeon series *Dora the Explorer,* represent Latina/os as part of a multicultural society.

Considering general market media representations since World War II, entertainment and news images present audiences with consistent negative stereotypes of Latina/os. Negative stereotypes suture people to a few visually simple images that demean, belittle, and marginalize. For Latina/os, Hollywood films project images of villains or sexualized lovers, and television programs feature maids and shady characters. Television and advertising images aimed at children have historically used humiliating and demeaning stereotypes for entertainment and product promotion, such as Speedy Gonzales and the Frito Bandito. With pressure from Latina/o advocacy groups, scholars, and critics, such characters are less frequently seen although not absent from media images. In news discourses, Latina/os continue to be criminalized and underrepresented. Local television news features stories of Latina/o teenage gang members and creates moral panic by racializing public issues such as immigration and crime. Children involved in these issues are often brought into news stories and constructed as part of public problems. Together, entertainment and news media provide ample examples of negative stereotypes and marginalizing images.

Despite the history of Latina/os living within the United States prior to the nation's founding, only recently have Latina/os garnered close attention and accommodation by mainstream corporations, politicians, and general market media corporations. The 2000 U.S. Census data showed rapid growth of a young Latina/o population. Media images that celebrate Latinidad have become more common in recent years as media companies, advertisers, and marketing demographers attempt to construct messages for Latina/o audiences. Film and television feature more positive Latina/o characters than in decades past, and television and print journalism include photographic representations of Latina/os that celebrate Latinidad and the contributions of artists and performers to U.S. culture. Much of the so-called "Latin pop explosion" that occurred at the turn of the 21st century provided positive images of singers and dancers such as Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez, who stand as teen icons. The ascent of multiculturalism as a dominant ideology in U.S. culture also casts Latina/o media images in positive light. While celebratory images of Latinidad represent changes in representation welcomed by many Latina/os, critics and scholars also warn that positive imagery neglects to confront social inequity that shapes the lived experience of Latinidad.

In contemporary entertainment media images targeted to children, many positive Latino/a characters populate storybooks, television, and films in Spanish and English. At the same time, media images of Latina/os in children's media remain understudied.

—Esteban del Río

See also Advertising, Ethnicity/Race in; Body Image, Ethnicity/Race and; Food Advertising, Gender, Ethnicity, and Age; Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in; Latin America, Media Use in; Latina/os, Media Effects on; Latina/os, Media Use by

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LATINA/OS, MEDIA USE BY

As Latina/os have become one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the United States, the group has begun to attract the attention of researchers. The media world of Latina/o children and adolescents seems to be unique in several important ways. First, Latina/o youth indicate greater exposure to certain types of media, most significantly television, indicating an average of one more hour of television viewing per day than Caucasian youth. Second, Latina/o youth are exposed to Spanish-language media, a media world that may include different images and messages from those found in English-language media. Finally, Latina/o children may have different audience involvement behaviors than children of other ethnic groups, and there is some indication that they are more likely to view to learn, to identify most closely with minority media personalities, and to perceive some aspects of the television world as more realistic.

TELEVISION VIEWING AMOUNTS

In 1999, a large survey (N = 3,155) conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation with children ages 2 to 18 found that, on average, Latina/o children spent about one hour more per day (7:05 hours) with media than European American children (6:00 hours). Among younger children (2-to-7-year-olds), this difference was accounted for by differences in television viewing. Latina/o children (ages 2 to 18) watched an average of 3:31 hours of television per day, significantly more than European American children (2:22 hours), but significantly less than African American children (3:56 hours). Other studies have found similar television viewing amounts for Latina/o youth, ranging from 3.71 hours per day for high school students to 4.14 hours per day for younger children. In terms of cable access, Latina/o children (42%) are less likely to have premium cable television at home, compared to African American children (55%).

As with young people from other ethnic groups, the largest proportion of Latina/o youth indicated that they watched children's entertainment programming (59%) and children's educational programming (45%). However, a lower proportion of Latina/o children and adolescents (37%) indicated that they watched comedy programming compared to African American children and adolescents (49%). Additionally, a lower proportion of older Latina/o children (ages 8 to 18: 16%) viewed television dramas compared to European Americans (25%).

SPANISH-LANGUAGE TELEVISION

Latina/o youth are often exposed to a second television world that is *not* part of the media diet of most non-Spanish speakers: Spanish-language television created both in the United States and in Latin America. Among Latina/os in the United States, Spanish-language television is both popular and accessible, with Univisión (the number one Spanish-language network in the United States) reaching close to 95% of the U.S. Latina/o audience, and Telemundo (the number two network) reaching approximately 84%. Evidence from advertising research suggests that Spanish-language TV may hold more credibility and possibly more influence among Latina/os than English-language TV.

This is not to say that Latina/os watch only Spanish-language television. In fact, research has found that much of the Latina/o television audience watches many of the same programs viewed by the general U.S. television audience. One study with Latina/o high school students found that 25% of their television viewing time was dedicated to watching Spanish-language programming. Although Latina/o youth are consistent viewers of Spanish-language television, it is not the only television viewing they are doing or even the majority of it. Both television worlds are important in studying this group. Findings indicate that language use, acculturation, and immigrant status are related to the language of television programming viewed, with Spanish speakers, new immigrants, and those who are less acculturated being more likely to watch Spanish-language television.

OTHER MEDIA CONSUMPTION

In terms of other media consumption, Latina/o children reported watching significantly more movies (21 minutes a day) than European American children (8 minutes a day) and similar amounts to black children (19 minutes a day). Similar trends were found for video games, with Latina/o children reporting 24 minutes of video game exposure, significantly more than what European American children reported but similar to what black children reported.

Latina/o children were found to be similar to children of other ethnicities in terms of their music

media exposure. Younger Latina/o children (ages 2 to 7) reported listening to the radio about 25 minutes a day and to CDs and tapes for 23 minutes a day. Older Latina/o children and adolescents (ages 8 to 18) reported listening to radio about 56 minutes a day and to CDs and tapes for 1 hour and 8 minutes a day. These amounts were similar to amounts reported by other ethnic groups in the same age groups. One of the few differences found in exposure to audio media was that Latina/o children were less likely to report having a CD player at home (86%) compared to European American children (92%). In addition, there were differences in the musical genres that were listened to, with Latina/o youth most likely to report listening to "Latin/salsa" music than any other ethnic group and more likely than European American youth to listen to "rap/hip hop."

Significant differences were found in terms of exposure to print media and computer time among Latina/o children. Although Latina/o youth reported spending the same amount of time with print media as youth of other ethnicities (about 38 minutes with all print media), a greater percentage of Latina/o children (23%) than European American children (12%) reported not having read on the previous day. In terms of computer exposure, Latina/o youth were less likely to have computers in their homes (48%) than European American youth (78%). Surprisingly, there were no ethnic-group differences in the amount of computer time for the total sample. However, when taking into account computer users only, Latina/o youth reported spending significantly more time on the computer (2:12 hours per day) than European American youth (1:35 hours per day).

AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT

In addition to sheer number of hours exposed to media, it is also important to assess audience involvement behaviors, including identification with media personalities, motivations for media use, and perceived reality of the media world. Research studies with Latina/o children and adolescents indicate that they prefer Latina/o characters and that, in the absence of Latina/o characters, Latina/o youth name African American television personalities as the celebrities they look up to the most. There is also some indication that Latina/o viewers may be more likely than Caucasian viewers to use TV intently to learn about the world. Survey data from more than 1,000 adults found that Latina/os were more likely than Caucasians to report using TV "to learn about myself" and "to learn new things." Work with younger participants has found that Latina/o youth were more likely to say that they learn interesting things from TV (23%) than European American youth (15%) and less likely to say they are "just killing time" when watching TV (48% versus 53% of European American youth). Additionally, Latina/o youth in one study believed more strongly than Caucasian youth that the portrayals of Mexican Americans on television were realistic.

—Rocío Rivadeneyra

See also Advertising, Ethnicity/Race in; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Ethnicity/Race, Stereotyping; Ethnicity/Race, Media Effects on Identity; Hip Hop, Ethnicity/Race in; Immigrants, Media Use by; Latin America, Media Use in; Latina/os, Media Effects on; Latina/os, Media Images of; Music, Personal Identity and

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LICENSING, MERCHANDISING AND

Merchandising and licensing seem to be nearly the same thing; the main difference between these two processes is in their goals. Licensing is meant to increase the revenues of a product or service; merchandising is a marketing instrument used to bring more attention to a product in new or existing markets. Merchandising is used by the owner of a trademark or copyright in the marketing process to draw as

much attention as possible to a product or service, whereas licensing is based on an agreement between partners. The owner of a trademark or copyright focuses on finding new markets with low risks. A licensee, on the other hand, tries to cut marketing costs by taking advantage of a well-known and accepted image that he or she hopes to transfer to his or her new product or service. Both licensing and merchandising play an important role in the handling of products and services targeted to children, adolescents, and their parents. A pioneer in the licensing of media products and characters is the Walt Disney Company, which licenses its characters and the Disney brand to partners all over the world.

TYPES OF LICENSING

Licensing of trademarks and service marks has become an important way to gain additional income from existing trademarks, but it has not always been a common practice. There are many different types of licensing, the most important being character licensing, personality licensing, event licensing, and brand licensing. Character licenses are the rights to use fictional characters for products and services. To use a character from a movie for books, posters, or video games, a company must have a license agreement with the owner of the character's copyright. In the case of personality licensing, the contract deals with a real person. Under such a license, a person's name and image cannot be used without permission. Event licensing involves popular events such as sports games and music concerts. The most popular kind of licensing, however, is brand licensing, in which a new company obtains the right to use a well-known brand to establish its business on the market.

NATIONAL REGULATORY DIFFERENCES

Many countries have traditionally forbidden the licensing of trademarks because the trademark that is licensed would no longer serve its perceived primary purpose: to indicate the source or origin of a product or service. As a result, some countries developed the concept of registered user agreements. This permits a person other than the original owner of the trademark to be an authorized user of this trademark in his or her own business. However, the problems with licensing have decreased significantly, and today most countries accept licensing as a way to enter new markets.

REASONS FOR LICENSING

One possible reason for a company to license a trademark is to extend the trademark's geographic range and the range of products with which it is associated with a minimum of risk for the owner of the original trademark. Still, the feasibility and advisability of licensing a trademark must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Many factors come into play, including the goods involved, the outlook and strategy of the owner of the trademark, and national market conditions. Possible license agreements include contracts with licensees in individual countries, contracts that cover bigger geographical regions (such as Western Europe), and contracts that deal with certain product lines, such as toys. In some licenses, the original licensee has the right to grant regional sublicenses to push products onto new markets.

A license agreement is usually a written document that is subject to the contractual laws of a particular jurisdiction. No matter what type of licensing arrangement is involved, the license must guarantee the trademark owner control over the quality of the licensed products. This means there must be consequences for the licensee who produces below-standard products using the license. Another part of a license agreement is a marketing schedule, which may enable the main owner of the trademark to push new products onto the market by licensing a trademark to several different licensees. This can generate a great deal of attention for the product through the marketing campaigns of the various licensees.

Another aspect of licensing agreements is the payment of royalties from the licensee to the licensor based on any number of factors. The risk for the licensee is in the amount of the royalty he or she must pay to the owner of the trademark. In the worst case, the cost will be too high for the licensee to profit from having the license. Such royalties often involve complex tax considerations and in some countries are subject to government agency approval. Many countries require licenses to be recorded with a local trademark office or other government agency. If such a requirement is not fulfilled for a given license, the license may be invalid in the region, and the trademark may be cancelled on the grounds of non-use.

On the whole, the main reason for licensing is to get additional profit from licensees in new markets. A common case involves the content owner of a popular book selling the license for a movie based upon the

book; an additional possibility could be a license for a computer game as well. A recent example of a successful trademark and copyright licensor is Marvel Comics. Superheroes from the Marvel Universe have been very successful in movies, in games, and on TV. The many presentations of Spiderman and his popular colleagues have brought Marvel profits that would have been impossible without licensing.

—*Hardy Dreier*

See also Advertising, Market Size and; Advertising, Regulation of; Disney

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LITERACY

Concern that media use might have negative effects on literacy and educational achievement among children can be dated back to the growth of popular literature in the mid-19th century and was greatly amplified by the rapid of diffusion of television in the 1950s. Recently, the hypothesis has received a fresh impulse from the rapid diffusion of new information and communication technologies.

THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

Most commentators are agreed that literacy means something more than "functional literacy" (i.e., the basic ability to read and write), although there is little agreement as to just what constitutes that something. Traditionally, it involved being well educated or knowledgeable or, to use more recent terminology, possessing large amounts of academic and cultural capital. Consequently, it has long been generally assumed that universal education is a prerequisite for the attainment of high levels of literacy in a society. However, some historians dispute this view, citing evidence that, in some countries, mass literacy was achieved before the introduction of universal schooling, implying that there is more than one route to literacy. Another view sees literacy as something composed not of neutral, technical, and universal elements but of competencies that are culturally and temporally specific to various social contexts (and their dominant groups), a view frequently adopted by ethnic and other minority groups. Recently, there has been a trend toward breaking down the concept into various "subliteracies"—such as print literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, computer (or e-)literacy, and information literacy—implying the acquisition of specific and not necessarily transferable competencies within each subdomain. In his comprehensive treatment of the interaction between media, cognition, and learning, Gavriel Salomon saw the neuropsychological evidence that different symbolic modes of information are processed in different parts of the brain as pointing to the conclusion that different kinds of content are processed by different cognitive systems, with varying amounts of mental translation involved. Thus, he argued, although watching TV may require less conscious effort than reading a book, TV viewing may facilitate learning for those who experience difficulty with print modes, albeit learning of a different kind. By extrapolation, this view has led some observers to suggest that electronic digital developments may be taking us toward entirely new forms of literacy that will be unlike any current forms of literary practice.

MEDIA AND LITERACY

There is a long-standing assumption that the invention of printing was primarily responsible for the development of literacy in the West and that other means of mass communication (such as TV and computers) must also, in one way or another, fundamentally affect it. However, some historians also question this assumption, arguing that levels of literacy were already rising in Europe before printing was invented and that the resulting demand for texts provided the impetus for printing rather than vice versa. Others see industrialization, rather than printing, as the primary motor driving the growth in literacy. If these (disputed) claims are correct, the whole traditionally assumed causal link between different forms of media and different forms of literacy is called into question.

PREVALENT THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Nevertheless, an extensive body of research has explored the relationship between media and literacy. Building on the extensive overview of the subject by Susan Neuman, four major theoretical assumptions underlying research into the effects of media on literacy and educational achievement may be discerned. Three of them are negative: *displacement theory* (that media take time away from reading and schoolwork), *information processing theory* (that reading-based activities activate the mind, whereas activities such as TV viewing are mentally pacifying), and *short-term gratification theory* (that media have radically changed children's expectations with regard to learning by stimulating the demand for constant novelty, pace, and stimulation). The fourth theoretical assumption is positive: *interest stimulation theory* (that media can enhance learning by stimulating interests). The positive potential of TV was underlined by Patricia Greenberg, who argued that TV is an intrinsically democratic medium that can make learning available to groups of children who fare less well in traditional educational situations. Conversely, in a number of polemical attacks in the 1980s, Neil Postman accused the media in general, and television in particular, of destroying print literacy as well as other aspects of academic and cultural accomplishment.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE: A SUMMARY

The predominant model tested has been a simple negative effects model dominated by TV use. Various educational consequences of excessive TV use have been postulated, such as poor concentration, reading and writing difficulties, and poor examination results. However, this negative effects hypothesis has never received consistent, convincing support. Attempts to operationalize and test alternative models have been rare, although one perspective that has received significant empirical support is based on the insight that the educational system helps to structure society by allocating students to different status groups and, by extrapolation, thereby also structures general cultural dispositions and styles, including media uses and preferences. In other words, the causal relation between education and media use is here reversed. In general, research in the field has seldom been sustained or systematic. There is no common agreement on the definition of literacy; most studies have been cross-sectional and have been conducted within a wide variety of disciplines, using a wide array of methods of measurements and analysis, thereby making meaningful comparison of results impossible. Consequently, there is little consensus among researchers. Finally, the rapid diffusion of digital information and communication technologies has radically altered the whole research context and has imposed new theoretical and methodological parameters upon it.

—Keith Roe

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Digital Literacy; Media Effects, Models of; Media Literacy, Aims and Purposes of; Media Literacy, Approaches to; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in; Media Literacy Programs; Reading, Impact of TV on

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LONELINESS

Loneliness researchers Leticia Peplau and Daniel Perlman have identified at least three common elements that characterize loneliness. First, loneliness is a subjective feeling in which a person perceives a deficiency in his or her social relationships. Therefore, the person wants more social interaction than he or she currently has. Second, loneliness is an

emotional experience usually described as a painful, negative, and aversive feeling. Third, it is also usually associated with feelings of isolation and rejection.

LONELINESS IN ADOLESCENCE

To understand loneliness in adolescence, one first needs to make the distinction between a temporary, mild degree of loneliness that is easily overcome (state loneliness) and a longer-lasting, severe degree of loneliness that is difficult to overcome (trait loneliness). All adolescents may experience some degree of the mild state of loneliness. For instance, adolescence is a time of identity building, and to some degree adolescents need to be alone to process their own thoughts and feelings and build their own identities. During these alone times, adolescents may make use of several different types of media, such as the Internet, music, and television. These media can help adolescents in their identity building; for example, adolescents may use the Internet to research a wide variety of topics they find interesting, or they may listen to music to reinforce their current identities. Research has shown that, although these alone times can produce loneliness, adolescents report greater positive affect after spending some time alone. In other cases, the longer-lasting trait loneliness may be an indication of an underlying problem that needs to be addressed. Trait loneliness suggests that these adolescents may have characteristics that keep them locked in a cycle of loneliness. Three main characteristics are (1) how they think about themselves and their expectations about others when forming relationships, (2) their level of social skills, and (3) how they cope with loneliness.

Several researchers have shown that lonely adolescents may think in ways that keep them from forming meaningful relationships and thus make them feel lonely. Lonely adolescents may think that they are not capable of forming relationships, that they are not worthy of anyone else's affections, or that they will be rejected in social situations. Many of these thoughts occur automatically, and adolescents may be unaware of how much their thinking influences their behavior in social situations. For example, they may not initiate conversations in social situations for fear of being rejected, or they may say little in conversations because they believe the other people in the conversation are not interested in what they have to say.

Researchers have also shown that lonely adolescents have poor social skills. Poor social skills include inability to initiate or sustain a conversation, not knowing how to appropriately disclose information about self, insensitivity to social cues that other people exhibit, and not knowing how to be responsive to other people in conversations. For example, adolescents may disclose too much or too little information in conversations, thus making other people in the conversation feel uncomfortable and perhaps unwilling to continue further communication.

Poor coping has also been pointed out by researchers as another contributing factor for loneliness. Positive ways of coping with loneliness allow an adolescent to deal with feelings of loneliness and move on. Such coping might include talking with others about how they feel, engaging in activities such as exercising, studying, engaging in a hobby, and so on. However, poor and negative ways of coping with loneliness keep adolescents locked in a cycle of loneliness. These poor coping activities include brooding about their loneliness, watching television, overeating, and using drugs. All these activities provide only a temporary reprieve from adolescents' feelings of loneliness and fail to address the underlying issues of why they feel lonely.

LONELINESS AND THE MEDIA

Some researchers have argued that media help adolescents feel less lonely, whereas others have argued that it may cause adolescents to feel lonelier. In some cases, researchers have argued that media use can have a cathartic effect; reading loneliness poetry or listening to music about loneliness, for example, may help adolescents relieve some of their feelings of loneliness. In other cases, researchers have argued that solitary media activities (such as watching television, playing computer games) displace the time that adolescents can spend on more social activities such as sports.

One type of media that has been investigated further to determine its effect on loneliness is the Internet. An interesting feature of the Internet is that it can be a solitary activity (such as Web surfing) or a social activity (for example, chat rooms and instant messaging). Research provides evidence that the Internet tends to "make the rich richer and the poor poorer." The Internet may help foster greater communication among adolescents who already have good social skills and a substantial group of friends, through such

features as text messaging (via Internet and cell phones), email, and so on. However, lonely adolescents with negative thinking patterns and poor social skills often have trouble forming relationships online. They may form superficial, temporary relationships that are not effective in helping them overcome their loneliness. Though there is less evidence of it, the Internet may also help the "poor get richer." Internet websites that provide information about loneliness and online loneliness discussion groups may help to change the lonely adolescents' ways of thinking and behaving that keep them feeling lonely.

Whatever the type of media usage, if it does not help the adolescent resolve the underlying issues causing the loneliness, it will not provide effective relief from loneliness. In some cases, the loneliness that adolescents feel may be only temporary, like the feelings at the end of a romantic relationship. Adolescents may use media in these cases to provide a cathartic effect and help them cope with their feelings of loneliness. In other cases, adolescents may feel lonely all the time because of some underlying issue, such as negative thinking patterns, poor social skills, and poor coping patterns. In these cases, media use may be less effective in reducing their feelings of loneliness over a period of time.

—Sean S. Seepersad

See also Bedrooms, Media Use in; Catharsis Theory; Internet Use, Social; Media Effects, Models of; Online Relationships; Peer Groups, Joint Use of Media in

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MAGAZINES, ADOLESCENT BOYS'

Little academic research has explored either the content or effects of magazines targeted at adolescent boys. What little research is publicly available is market research; such work largely describes who reads what magazines and suggests that teenage boys in the United States gravitate toward hobby or special-interest magazines rather than male equivalents of the lifestyle magazines popular among adolescent girls. In fact, some researchers have suggested that teenage boys perceive the very idea of lifestyle magazines as essentially feminine, and they reject the idea of such a magazine designed for them.

Most research that asks what magazines teenage boys read has been conducted by Mediamark Research, Inc., for the Magazine Publishers of America (MPA), a trade group. Of magazines MPA describes as "teen interest," half of the highest circulation titles are primarily of interest to males. These include *Boy's Life*, the official magazine of the Boy Scouts of America or BSA (with a reported circulation of 1.28 million), three magazines focusing on video games and game play (e.g., *Game Informer* with a reported circulation of 1.32 million), and *Sports Illustrated for Kids* (with a reported circulation of 760,000). Of these, the only one clearly produced exclusively for boys, of course, is *Boy's Life,* and its circulation figures may not reflect the same degree of interest or readership as those of other titles. Many local units of the BSA purchase subscriptions for all boys enrolled in any of their programs, including boys as young as 7 years old.

An alternative indicator of what magazines teenage boys read is the percentage of a given title's readers who are teenage boys. Although this does not indicate in absolute terms how many boys read these magazines, it does suggest the importance of teen audiences to a specific magazine. In 2004, Mediamark Research, Inc., reported that the magazines reporting the highest percentage of teenage boys in their readership are primarily magazines designed for automotive and motor sport enthusiasts. Examples include *Dirt Rider* (30% of readers are teenage boys), *4 Wheel and Off Road* (20% of readers are teen boys), and *Popular Hot Rodding* (18% of readers are teenage boys). Readers of professional wrestling fan magazines are also disproportionately likely to be teenage boys (e.g., *WWE Magazine*, with 20% of its readers being teenage boys). It is helpful to compare these figures with those from magazines actually designed for teenage girls—the readership of *Seventeen* is only 36% teenage girls, and the readership of *YM* is only 47% teenage girls.

No formal analyses have explored the contents of magazines targeted at or read predominantly by teenage boys in the United States. One such study has been undertaken in the Netherlands, however. Whereas the United States has no prominent lifestyle magazines for teenage boys, in the Netherlands, a lifestyle magazine for teenage boys is published and enjoys a sizable readership. A comparison between its contents and those of a popular, comparable magazine for girls found that the boys' magazine focused more on hobbies (such as motor sports and technology) and celebrities, the girls' more on fashion and beauty. The study's author concludes that the boys' magazine reinforces masculine stereotypes in much the same way girls' magazines reinforce feminine stereotypes.

Some research on the effects of advertising in youth-oriented magazines has included men's lifestyle magazines such as *Maxim* and *FHM* (also called "lad magazines"). Although the typical readers of such magazines are significantly older than teens, it is likely that many teen boys also read them. Lad magazines contain content evocative of magazine genres popular among teen boys (e.g., sections on technology, cars, and celebrities) as well as content comparable to that found in girls' lifestyle magazines (e.g., sections on fashion and consumer products). The magazines are also frankly sexual and feature numerous images of provocatively dressed and posed women as well as articles about sex. Advertisements for alcohol are common, and alcohol is a common element in articles about sex. Reading lad magazines has been linked in at least one study to perceptions that alcohol use is commonplace and acceptable, to expectations that alcohol use brings positive effects, and to increased alcohol consumption among middle school students. No research on the effects of other elements of lad magazine content has been published as of this writing.

—Laramie D. Taylor

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Magazines, Adolescent Girls'; Sexual Information, Teen Magazines and

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MAGAZINES, ADOLESCENT GIRLS'

With their subscription rates numbering in the millions, teen magazines are viewed as a ubiquitous socializing force among girls in the Western world. Early research on teen magazines began in the 1970s, with Angela McRobbie's groundbreaking content analysis of the popular British publication, *Jackie*. Since then, research evidence has slowly accumulated elsewhere to provide detailed descriptions of the content of teen magazines, to understand how adolescent girls interpret magazine messages, and to examine links between magazine reading and girls' beliefs and behaviors. Among researchers' most frequently cited concerns is the narrow range of topics discussed in teen magazines and their emphasis on girls' need to look good and attract boys.

TEEN MAGAZINES AS A UNIQUE MEDIUM IN GIRLS' LIVES

Currently, mainstream teen magazines (e.g., *Seventeen, YM, Teen*) represent one of the largest segments of a thriving consumer magazine industry. Researchers estimate that nearly all girls in the United States read teen magazines occasionally and that more than 70% of girls read them on a regular basis. By providing detailed instructions that promise to help girls improve their physical appearance and relationships, teen magazines communicate a level of intimacy with their readers that is rarely shared by other media. Indeed, some researchers have likened the "how to" nature of magazine messages to the type of advice that is provided by an older and more knowledgeable sister or girlfriend. Consistent with this view, research suggests that most readers find teen magazines to be a trustworthy and valuable source of information.

CONTENT OF TEEN MAGAZINES

The vast majority of studies investigating teen magazines are content analyses, which provide detailed descriptions of the quantity and quality of magazine messages. Content analyses reveal that the most common topics discussed in teen magazines focus on fashion, beauty, domestic life, and romantic relationships. In particular, teen magazines have been found to support traditional gender roles, placing high value on girls' physical appearance and their capacity to attract boys and maintain heterosexual romantic relationships. As notable as the presence of messages supporting traditional gender roles is the absence of other types of content. In particular, researchers have noted that girls' interest in education, careers, travel, sports, public service, or politics is rarely mentioned. Moreover, the topics covered in mainstream teen magazines

appear to be relatively consistent regardless of the particular magazine in question, the era in which it was published, or its country of origin. Indeed, themes identified in teen magazines published in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and the Netherlands are strikingly similar across several decades.

MESSAGES ABOUT FEMININITY AND GENDER ROLES

Through the topics covered and the advice given, teen magazines provide strong and often contradictory messages about what it means to be a girl and about how girls should act in relationships with others. Specifically, teen magazines adhere to traditional norms of femininity that portray girls as dependent, preoccupied with their physical appearance, and consumed by heterosexual desire. In a content analysis of *Seventeen* spanning more than 30 years (1961–1985), Kate Peirce found that in all three decades, about 60% of the editorial content was devoted to discussions about girls' appearance and their interest in keeping house (i.e., decorating, cooking), whereas little attention was devoted to topics of personal development and growth. In a follow-up analysis of fiction stories presented in *Seventeen* and *Teen*, she found that the female protagonists were almost always portrayed as weak and dependent on others to solve their problems. Moreover, analyses of *Seventeen*, *YM*, and *Teen* indicate that these magazines explicitly encouraged girls to be confident and "be themselves," but the implicit message was that they should do so in order to attract boys. Thus, in teen magazines, heterosexual romance is described as a significant and serious component of adolescent development, and one that will ultimately bring happiness and meaning to girls' lives.

Two studies have examined teen magazines' portrayals of the working world. One analysis of fiction articles in *Seventeen* and *Teen* showed that occupations were often gender stereotyped. Whereas women were usually depicted in service and caretaking occupations (e.g., nurses, social workers, and sales clerks), men were depicted in a wider variety of careers, many of which were prestigious or required high educational attainment (e.g., doctors, lawyers, and bankers). Over a decade later, a second study found that the most frequently mentioned occupations in *Seventeen* were based in the entertainment industry. Becoming an actress, musician, dancer, or model not only was depicted as a realistic aspiration for girls and young women, but also was regarded with much admiration and prestige.

MESSAGES ABOUT BEAUTY AND BODIES

A recurring theme in teen magazines is that feminine success can be achieved by making oneself physically beautiful. Via advertisements, images, and editorial content, girls are encouraged to wear cosmetics and to keep up-to-date with the latest fashion trends. Guidelines are provided by expert advisers, such as supermodels and celebrities, and often require that readers purchase a variety of beauty products. Many researchers express concern over magazines' competing needs to serve adolescent girls and satisfy their advertisers. They argue that advertisers benefit when magazines exploit girls' insecurities about their physical appearance during a period characterized by rapid physical growth and change.

Teen magazines have also been charged with promoting an ideal of thinness. Analyses of magazine images show that they promote a homogeneous and often unattainable standard of beauty; models are almost always Caucasian, tall, long-legged, light-skinned, curve-free, and air brushed to physical perfection. In addition, girls' bodies are presented as objects that need to be carefully monitored through exercise, dieting, costuming, and comportment.

Teen magazines convey ambivalent messages about body functions. Content analyses of menstrual product advertisements indicate that in teen magazines, menstruation is described both as a natural process and as a source of considerable embarrassment and discomfort. Advertisements for menstrual medications emphasize the importance of "staying slim" during the menstrual period and describe how menstrual products offered girls the "protection" they needed to "feel safe" against staining and unwanted odors. Thus, in teen magazines, girls' bodies are portrayed as not only thin but also sanitary and odor-free.

MESSAGES ABOUT SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL HEALTH

A growing body of studies has focused on depictions of sexuality in teen magazines. Research indicates that the amount of sexual content in teen magazines has increased dramatically in recent years, even as the proportion of health-related sexual information has diminished. By the 1990s, the most frequently

discussed sexual topics were general references to sexual activity, followed by messages about sexual decision making, virginity, and female sexual responsibility. Some other issues that were openly addressed by teen magazines, albeit less frequently, were one-night stands, sexual abuse, incest, oral sex, erotic dreams, masturbation, and emergency contraception. Although the range of sexual topics in teen magazines has broadened and become more explicit in recent years, several researchers point out that references to gay and lesbian issues are still conspicuously absent.

Teen magazines are replete with sexual scripts, which dictate how women and men are supposed to act in dating and sexual relationships. For the most part, these scripts support a sexual double standard, describing boys as active and aggressive sexual initiators and girls as sexual objects and limit-setters who are responsible for the negative sexual consequences of intercourse. Several researchers have examined magazines' contradictory portrayals of female sexuality, which encourage girls to dress and behave in sexually provocative ways but to abstain from sexual activity. Contradictory messages are also seen in teen magazine portrayals of losing one's virginity. Although one study found that *Seventeen* increasingly recognized girls' capacity to experience sexual desire, this nontraditional script was overshadowed by more frequent messages about girls' ambivalence toward sexuality, their potential to be sexual victims, and the morality of their sexual decisions.

GIRLS' INTERPRETATION OF MAGAZINE MESSAGES

Qualitative research has examined how adolescent girls approach and interpret the content of teen magazines. Although most girls report reading magazines for entertainment purposes or to fill time, many say that they turn to magazines for guidance and to learn about other girls' lives. Indeed, advice columns, quizzes, and nonfiction articles rank among girls' favorite sections, as they provide a look into what are presented as typical concerns of other adolescent girls. Research suggests that girls do not necessarily accept magazine messages at face value. Rather, readers engage with the text, comparing the content with their own lived experiences and mulling over the magazines' recommendations.

Girls' selection and interpretation of magazine content may be moderated by race/ethnicity and age. In particular, research suggests that compared to white girls, African American girls perceive the content of mainstream teen magazines to be less realistic and less relevant to their lives. In interviews, African American girls dismissed editors' suggestions for hair care and cosmetics as irrelevant and were critical of these magazines' restrictive standard of beauty. Older African American girls were especially astute at identifying the lack of diversity in teen magazines.

LINKING GIRLS' READING TO THEIR BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS

Few studies have attempted to link girls' reading of teen magazines to their beliefs and behaviors. Research that has examined such connections has focused on girls' feelings about their bodies. Research suggests that sheer exposure to teen magazines (i.e., how often magazines are read) is unrelated to girls' attitudes about their bodies. However, the extent to which girls compare themselves to magazine images has been associated with a variety of negative body-related outcomes, including worse appearance self-esteem, higher body dissatisfaction, greater drive to be thin, and more pathogenic weight control behaviors. Thus, the relation between magazine reading and girls' body attitudes and weight-related behavior seems to be best explained by social comparison theory. Notably, most of these studies use correlational data and therefore cannot determine whether reading these magazines has an influence on beliefs and behaviors related to body image or whether girls with certain body image beliefs and behaviors are most drawn to the magazines.

In a noteworthy longitudinal and experimental study, girls were randomly selected to receive a 15-month subscription to *Seventeen* magazine. Results indicated that exposure to teen magazines was associated with lower body satisfaction, but not uniformly across all girls. Although there was no main effect for the experimental manipulation, girls in the experimental condition who reported higher body dissatisfaction at baseline had a significant growth in negative affect about their bodies several months later. The authors concluded that magazine exposure effects are likely to be short-lived except among girls who exhibit heightened vulnerability.

ALTERNATIVES TO MAINSTREAM TEEN MAGAZINES

Alternatives to mainstream teen magazines have become increasingly available to adolescent girls. The late 1990s witnessed the rise of a number of niche magazines targeting specific segments of the population, including preteen girls (e.g., *Cosmo Girl*), and girls of color (e.g., *Word Up!*). Zines (also, *grrrl zines*) are another alternative magazine form that has emerged in the past two decades. Zines are usually independently published magazines that are written by and for adolescent girls. A stated objective of many zine writers is to challenge dominant cultural standards of femininity and beauty and to offer messages about female empowerment and social justice. Formal research on zine writers and readers is still quite limited at this time.

—Janna L. Kim

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Advertising in Girls' Magazines; Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Gender Roles in Magazines; Research Methods, Content Analyses; Schemas/Scripts, Sexual; Sexual Information, Teen Magazines and; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory; Socialization and Media; Zines

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MAGAZINES, CHILDREN'S

Children's magazines are those periodicals that target children ages 6 months to 13 years old, a diverse group of magazines that range from board books with rounded corners to high-gloss periodicals that mimic more mainstream magazines. Some children's magazines are widely circulated, such as *Boys' Life* (circulation 1.45 million) and *Highlights* (circulation 3 million). In recent years, the children's magazine market has grown. Since 1993, more than 150 new children's magazines have been launched.

Children's magazines target several age groups and cover diverse subject areas. For instance, *Babybug* (circulation 25,000) is a nontraditional magazine that targets the youngest of readers (6 months to 2 years). A board book with rounded corners and no staples, it features bright, simple pictures with rhymes and simple sentences. Despite its unusual format, *Babybug* and any serial publication that targets children are included in the children's magazine industry. Whereas adult magazines are categorized by gender, race, and subject area, the magazine industry does not segment children's magazines in this way. Children's magazines cover such topics as wildlife and natural history (e.g., *Ranger Rick* and *National Geographic for Kids*), international issues (e.g., *Short Story International*), and consumer reports (e.g., *Zillions*). Furthermore, some children's serial publications are versions of mainstream magazines targeted to adults, such as *Sports Illustrated for Kids* (circulation 600,000), which was launched in 1989.

One study of children's use of magazines have found that about 11% of children ages 5 to 7 and 15% of children ages 8 to 10 reported reading magazines the previous day. Overall, magazine reading remains constant as children age. Children's magazines have often been used to try to encourage young children to become lifetime readers and learners.

By most accounts, children's magazines date back to the 1700s. At the beginning, they were largely pedantic in nature and were created to help children learn about themselves and the world around them.

One of the oldest children's magazines still in publication is *Jack and Jill* (circulation 326,000), which was first published in 1938. It focuses on children's health and nutrition. *Highlights*, first published in 1946, has one of the largest circulations among children's magazines. It targets children from 2 to 12 years old and contains a wide array of content, with an emphasis on puzzles and games.

The magazine industry today hardly resembles the educational, nonglossy formats that were prevalent when *Jack and Jill* and *Highlights* were first published, having experienced fairly dramatic changes in both design and marketing content. With the inclusion of advertising, most children's magazines today have the look and feel of more mainstream magazines. These changes are due to increased competition from a larger number of magazines and from other media outlets, such as television.

Mass media scholars have largely ignored children's magazines, but a few scholars have focused on the potential messages that children may receive from this content. Although most research focuses on the potential lack of educational content in newer serials, some takes a media effects perspective. For example, Susan Lynn and her colleagues analyzed the gender portrayals in advertisements in *Sports Illustrated for Kids*. They found that male characters outnumbered female characters and were more often shown in dominant roles, whereas girls were shown in limited athletic and gender-stereotyped roles.

Other scholars have been concerned with children's magazines as marketing media. Overall, such investigations arise from concern about the potential effects of marketing on children (e.g., encouraging unhealthy eating or consumerism). Some children's magazines are linked to a specific children's toys (e.g., *Barbie*, which was published from 1984 to 1996) or corporation (e.g., *Nickelodeon Magazine)*, and some scholars argue that they are little more than public relations material. For most magazines, however, the marketing is limited to advertisements. Earlier children's publications, such as *Jack and Jill* and *Highlights,* did not include advertising, but now many children's magazines do.

—Stacey J. T. Hust

See also Advertising, Effects on Children of; Gender Roles in Magazines; Infants and Toddlers, Developmental Needs of; Infants and Toddlers, Media Exposure of; Media Effects; Media Effects, History of Research on; Preschoolers, Media Impact on Developmental Needs of

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MANGA (JAPANESE COMIC BOOKS)

Manga, Japanese comic books or graphic novels (novels told using the comic form), are legitimate forms of popular art and literature in Japan, enjoyed by children, young people, and adults. The pen-and-ink drawings are printed on newsprint in magazines with dimensions similar to phonebooks. The magazines include series installments of 20- to 50-page manga from established artists and complete stories from newer artists. Magazines have from 200 to 800 pages. In addition to the manga, the magazines include comics in a four-panel format similar to those in American newspapers. Successful series are compiled and reprinted in paperback format on higher-quality paper. Popular manga are made into anime (animated films or television series).

The term *manga* literally means "rambling picture." It developed from a style of Japanese woodblock prints, *ukiyoe,* that commonly depicted actors, sumo wrestlers, and beautiful courtesans. Hokusai, a 19th-century artist, first applied the term for the woodblock prints in his 15-volume *Hokusai Manga,* a popular collection of caricatures of samurai and nobles. The art of manga has been traced to scrolls from the 12th century that depict animals engaged in human activities, including frogs depicted as priests.

Manga's current form combines Japanese and Western drawing techniques. After World War II, manga grew in popularity. Manga by Osamu Tezuka, who adapted several novels to the graphic form before creating *Astro Boy* (1952), proved particularly popular and established the modern artistic style. Although styles vary by artist, manga frequently portray wide-eyed characters, particularly adolescents, and androgynously beautiful women and men. Younger manga artists are

encouraged to imitate established artists. Numerous volumes giving advice on drawing in the manga style are available in Japanese, English, and other languages.

Manga dispel a stereotype about Japan as a humorless nation. In addition to manga's depiction of a wide range of social phenomena, from the social order to sexism and racism, the stories and artwork include humor, satire, language puns, and exaggeration not typically associated with Japanese society. This is at odds with the general characterization of Japan as a culture that prefers the ambiguous and subtle to the explicit and straightforward. Manga are anything but subtle.

Manga have an international following, particularly among high school and college students, with popular titles translated into at least 30 languages. Most fans and artists insist that magazines be printed in Japanese format, reading from right to left. The first and longest running series in English, *Oh My Goddess,* began in 1994. Initially, manga in the United States were popular only with male comic collectors and were sold in specialty shops. The availability of manga in mainstream bookstores spurred sales of other styles of manga, particularly series favored by teenage girls. Manga represent the fastest-growing segment of the American publishing market, with 2004 sales reaching $204 million, 35% higher than 2003. Manga sales in Japan have declined recently, but the 2004 sales still surpassed $4 billion. More than 9 million websites provide information about manga in English.

Different types of manga have distinctive appearances and are considered age specific. The most popular manga are those for teenage boys (*shonen*) and teenage girls (*shojo*), although these also have adult fans. Teen manga may include futuristic elements, although series based on traditional stories are also produced.

One popular *shonen* manga title is *Dragon Ball* (Japan 1984–1995; United States 2000), by Akira Toriyama. This fantasy action series is based on the Chinese folktale *Journey to the West* and follows the hero's martial arts adventures from childhood through old age. Most manga for teenage boys have similar premises. They rely on action by male protagonists, include humor amid the action, and depict camaraderie between male characters in sports or battles.

Shojo manga, popular with teenage girls, have strong female protagonists and portray emotions along with the action. The stories often include magic, futuristic settings, and romantic interests. Popular *shojo* manga titles such as *Ceres, Celestial Legend* (Japan 1996–2000; United States 2004), by Yuu Watase, mix teenage angst with adventure and romance. The story line of *Ceres, Celestial Legend* is similar to any fairy tale of a mortal taking something from a celestial maiden that prevents her from returning to her world. One specific kind of *shojo* manga includes depictions of sexuality that may shock those unprepared for teenagers who magically switch genders, sibling romances, relationships between humans and aliens, and affairs between two androgynously beautiful male characters. That some titles have not been the subject of parental objections is generally attributed to Americans' unfamiliarity with manga. American publishers concerned about sexuality in manga seek series that do not include graphic depictions, as fans protest when series are altered from the originals.

The manga series *Oh My Goddess, called "Aa Megami-Sama"* in Japanese, is frequently labeled as a *shojo manga* because of the romantic appeal of the goddess Belldandy, shown here. However, the manga's focus on the interactions of Keiichi (who could be any teenage boy) with the goddess and her sisters, Urd and Skuld, gives the series a crossover appeal with *shonen* fans. The original Japanese version of the romantic comedy, by manga artist Kosuke Fujishima, began in 1988, and the first anime movie in the series was released in 2000.

SOURCE: © Kosuke Fujishima.

Besides teens, some types of manga are targeted for children, young men (*seinen*), and young women (*josei*). Children's manga are cute and humorous. Unlike children's manga, adult manga do not include *furigana* (reading aids added over *kanji,* Japanese characters borrowed from Chinese). *Josei* manga have

realistic portrayals of life, including romance and sex. *Seinen* manga have the widest range of artistic styles and content, from avant-garde postmodernism to therotic or even pornographic. The gritty and futuristic avant-garde manga are popular with most fans, and other manga deal with historic themes and literary adaptations.

—Tamara Swenson

See also Anime

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MEAN WORLD SYNDROME

Mean world syndrome is the tendency for heavy TV viewers to believe that the world is a more hostile and unfriendly place than it actually is, to be more afraid of becoming a victim of violent crime, and to be more distrustful of others. The mean world effect is derived from cultivation theory as developed by George Gerbner in 1969. According to the theory, repeated exposure to media has small but cumulative effects on people's beliefs about what the real world is like.

There are first- and second-order components to mean world beliefs. First-order components are simple distortions in beliefs about the prevalence of crime. Second-order components are the ways these beliefs influence value judgments and attitudes toward th world.

Research has provided the strongest support for first-order components. Heavy TV viewers (defined as those who watch 4 hours per day or more) are more likely to believe in a mean world because television violence is more vivid than most day-to-day experiences and thus is remembered better. Vivid images have a disproportionate influence on decisions because people often base their decisions on the first thoughts that come to mind, rather than on accurate information. Thus, heavy TV viewers are more fearful about becoming victims of violence, more distrustful of others, and more likely to perceive the world as a dangerous, mean, and hostile place (Cantor provides a review of this research). Although the effects are cumulative over time, Peterson and Zill found evidence of mean world beliefs in children as young as 7 years old.

The degree to which people rely on television as a source of information depends on whether viewers think television provides an accurate depiction of the real world. News reports influence mean world beliefs more than other types of media, probably because they are perceived as more accurate. Also, Linda Heath and John Petraitis found that violent media makes people more afraid of crime in their own city than in their own neighborhood, probably because they have more firsthand experience with their own neighborhood. Television violence may also appear more accurate if people have experiences that confirm the mean world it portrays. Heavy television viewers who have experienced real-world violence are especially likely to endorse mean world beliefs.

There is also some evidence that biased estimates of violence change people's behavior. Heavy TV viewers are more likely to purchase a gun or a guard dog than are light TV viewers, and they show greater tolerance of police brutality and restrictions of civil liberties. Robert Putnam has even suggested that reduced trust in others causes the breakdown of *social capital* (civic participation), although further research is needed.

—Jesse J. Chandler and Brad J. Bushman

See also Cultivation Theory; Fantasy–Reality Distinction; News, Children's Exposure to; News, Children's Responses to

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MEDIA, FUTURE OF

This entry makes some informed guesses about the potential changes in media technologies and forms, especially those popular among children and young people. Although it mainly describes expected changes in Western countries, these media and formats are also increasingly available in other parts of the world.

GLOBALIZATION

The globalization in media channels and forms is likely to increase. Improved satellite technologies will decrease differences across boundaries, while the media technology divide may increase within nations. In many countries, children and young people will be able to watch a number of international channels, for example, Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon, Jetix, and the Disney channels. Adolescents will continue to enjoy global music channels such as MTV and Music First. Popular genres among children will be cartoons and situation comedies. Among young people, reality genres will remain popular, as will international competition program concepts like *Idol*. Feature films will remain popular, and so will programs about animals, nature, and different cultures, contemporary as well as ancient. Among young people, American entertainment about romance and dating (e.g., *Friends*) will stay popular. More interactive forms such as chat TV will increase in popularity.

CHANGES IN TELEVISION USE

Television will remain the main medium among children and young people in terms of number of people watching and time used for the medium. However, there will be two main developments in the way children and young people relate to TV, reinforcing tendencies that are visible today. First, children and young people's TV viewing will increasingly be part of their multitasking: Children will watch TV at the same time as they do something else: eating, playing, or performing school homework. TV will be used especially in interaction with the computer. Children will spend time in front of the computer instant messaging, chatting, or checking out websites about TV programs or TV personalities while they watch TV. Another important change in TV viewing habits will be the tendency to time shift. Young people will tape their favorite programs on DVD recorders and video or download on personal computers and burn them. They may watch the recorded programs when it is more convenient for them. Television game consoles will also remain popular among children and young people, especially among young boys.

COMPUTER USE

The main media of the future will be computers and mobile phones. These technologies will become increasingly important in the everyday lives of children and young people. Children will learn to use computers at preschool age, either in their homes or preschool institutions. A number of games and websites are already available for the youngest children, and more will be developed. Computers will increase in significance as the children grow older, with this multimedia machine functioning as a game player, a communication tool (email and chat), a means of personal expression (websites and personal profiles), a site for Internet access, and a tool for homework; the computer will often contain a CD-ROM and DVD player. In addition, the Internet will be used for consuming other media—for downloading music (e.g., to an iPod), skimming the main news or newspaper headlines, listening to the radio, and watching programs one missed on TV. The Internet may also be used for shopping or for keeping in contact with friends, for example, through instant messaging. More young people will also acquire Web cameras; especially for teenagers with a boy- or girlfriend, this will be a popular way to keep in touch across geographical distances.

MOBILE PHONES

The mobile phone will also remain popular among young people, and increasingly, it will be introduced

to even younger children. Many parents will want their children to have a mobile phone so that parents can keep in touch with children and organize school and leisure transport. Children will continue to use the mobile phone, especially for SMS messages with their friends. Mobile phones will be used to coordinate their daily social lives and also for flirting. A negative side is that the mobile phone can also be used for bullying, when some youngsters send threatening or negative comments to others. In addition, advertisers will aim to reach young people and children through mobile advertising and sales campaigns. The mobile phone will also be used to convey more visuals, such as personal pictures or shots from situations and vacation spots and for music (MP3s).

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Media tools will become smaller and more mobile. One example is iPods: Children and young people will be able to store their favorite music, downloaded from the Internet or copied from their own and their friends' CDs. Children will listen to music on CD players when they walk or use transportation. Another increasingly popular technology will be small DVD players designed for traveling, particularly by car. Families will purchase such DVDs for their children so children can watch films or play games in the back of the car.

PRIVATIZATION OF MEDIA USE

Another tendency will be a privatization of media use within the family. Due to cheaper and smaller technological tools and increasing living standards in the West, children will increasingly have their own media technologies in their bedroom. There will be an even stronger tendency toward a bedroom culture, where teenagers' rooms are furnished with PC/Internet, TV, console games, DVDs, CD players, and so on. In this sense, there will be greater opportunities for children and young people to use media the way they want. But parents will also increasingly feel a need to regulate media, to make websites and programs with pornographic, pedophile, or violent content unavailable for their children. Filter technologies will increasingly be available to assist parents in such regulation efforts. Some parents will also become concerned with the increasing commercial pressure on their children and thus try to limit their children's access to such messages.

—Ingunn Hagen

See also Computer Use (various entries); Media Genre Preferences; Multitasking; Regulation, Television

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MEDIA, MEANINGS OF

In the 19th century, natural scientists had to name many newly discovered objects and processes. Most of the new terms were precise and effective, and they have stood the test of time. During the past half century, what has come to be called *media studies* has expanded greatly and in many directions, creating a need for definitions in this field. The word *media* has been treated as a singular, although the dictionary insists it is plural. It may be used to refer to organizations, such as newspaper publishers or television stations; to the content that is transmitted (such as a program or a book); to hardware such as a data disc; or to the whole phenomenon of communication between sender and receiver.

Medium, the singular form of *media,* is derived from Latin and originally meant middle or between. It refers best to what some have called the channel or the pathway for information between the sender and receiver. Because psychologists believe that information carried by each of the modalities to each of the senses is processed in different ways and parts of the brain, Joseph Wober proposed a detailed system of words to deal with these communication actors and processes.

Under this system, the term *message systems* refers to complex entities such as television companies and advertisers; these encode and display information via

what might well be termed *sign agents* (e.g., programs, billboards, electronic speakers). From these screens, surfaces, and electronic (and human and animal) speakers, information passes through the media, of which the air carries three: light produces sight, molecular pressure carries sound, and particular molecules convey scent, thus reaching the three distance senses. Three other sensory systems internal to each human being transmit thermal, pressure, and movement and positional information. There are thus (at least) six media consisting of the pathways along which information reaches a human brain. In this view, there are no "new media," although new message systems and new sign agents are continually being devised and marketed. When Marshall McLuhan coined his aphorism "The medium is the message," this is surely what he meant—that the route by which data reach the brain has substantial consequences for how the brain deals with messages and therefore what kinds of meanings we can make of them.

This proposed set of labels indicates that television and the movies each involve two media (sight and sound); print works one medium (sight); radio and the many forms of sound speakers, one medium each; and perfume, one medium. A riot engages three or possibly four media (sight, sound, bodily pressure, smell). Individuals have to learn how to interpret signals received via each (sensory) medium; the skills for encoding messages (e.g., making programs, writing texts) and for decoding them (e.g., understanding movies, reading print) are different, and each requires the mastery of specific skills. In technically advanced societies, most people learn these skills without noticing the process; however, in other cultures and among individuals with learning deficits, these may be specific to particular sense modalities.

These labels invite us to think of the differences between encoding and decoding skills (making and understanding messages); such skills may be more or less well developed by our experiences specific to each medium. These labels also invite attention to the scope with which each medium can transmit information with more or less sophisticated codes. Vision is currently uppermost in print-literate cultures although the balance may be altering, with sound gaining in its diversification.

—Joseph M. Wober

See also Media, Future of

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MEDIA ADVOCACY

Mass media are powerful in presenting issues and shaping opinions in the society, and media advocacy is an approach that attempts to influence media's coverage of an issue and to help a relevant policy achieve public awareness and support. According to Lawrence Wallack, Lori Dorfman, and their colleagues, the purpose of media advocacy is to contribute to the development of social and policy initiatives that promote health and well-being. In general, media advocacy efforts focus on issues related to health and human well-being, and the goal is usually to get more news coverage for a topic and to shape the relevant debates in a desired fashion.

Media advocacy efforts largely emphasize news coverage because news has a crucial impact on people at both the personal and public levels. At the personal level, news media may provide information and elicit changes in individuals' knowledge and attitudes about a topic, and it may even stimulate a person to take actions. At the public level, mass media can raise awareness of certain issues among the public and policymakers and can contribute to improving conditions in the society. For example, a news report on former president Ronald Reagan's colon cancer and publicity following the death of television journalist Katie Couric's husband, who had the same disease, motivated people to get tests to detect the same health problem. A series of newspaper articles on infant mortality led to legislative support for providing low-cost prenatal care.

HOW MEDIA ADVOCACY WORKS

Several theoretical notions are often mentioned to explain why and how advocacy efforts through news media may work. In particular, agenda setting and framing theory provide good perspectives to understand the important role of news media in the process of advocating an issue or a public policy.

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting proposes that media can influence the public agenda regarding what issues are considered important; framing theory suggests that the way media frame or present an issue can influence how people think about it. Specifically, the initial research on agenda setting proposed that the media coverage and placement of an issue could influence the public to consider the issue an important topic. That is, the media agenda sets the public agenda: The issues selected and covered by media become the issues on the top of public's mind. For example, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw analyzed media coverage of the 1968 presidential election. They found that issues receiving the most media coverage were also the issues voters considered important. This study was followed by many others that found much the same thing, leading to a large body of literature on agenda setting. In short, early research on agenda setting described that media determine what issues audiences think about.

More recent research on agenda setting suggested that media could further influence how audiences think about an issue. Scholars suggested that the media could also influence whether people associated positive or negative attributes with a policy or person. For example, Guy Golan and Wayne Wanta found that a political candidate who was covered more favorably in media was more likely to be perceived in a positive light. Such influence is called second-level agenda setting.

Framing Theory

Relevant to second-level agenda setting, framing theory proposes that there are some consistent patterns in the way that media cover an issue and that these patterns influence how audiences conceive the issue. As Robert Entman argued, the ways in which media frame an issue determine what information people can select from and what will be left out, as well as what issues will be considered salient. Framing theory also suggests that what and how information is presented in media can impact people's recognition of problems, their diagnoses of what causes these problems, and their judgments and selection of solutions. Framing theory holds that because message framing influences how people's cognitive schema and attribution process are constructed, it can determine how media content is comprehended and incorporated with existing knowledge and can even shape the attitudes and behaviors people adopt. Thus, as advocates attempt to communicate with target audiences, message framing plays an important role in shaping an issue during the agenda setting process.

MEDIA ADVOCACY RELATED TO YOUTH

Some activist groups or organizations use media advocacy strategies to promote children's and adolescents' health and well-being. Some of their efforts have generated positive outcomes and have been documented as successful cases in health promotion through a media advocacy approach. For example, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) organization has been successful in obtaining and sustaining media attention as well as public support for policies to reduce drunk driving. In one case reported in a 1991 issue of *Lobbying and Influence Alert*, MADD mobilized to generate media coverage and public responses to a drunk driving law in Hawaii; the law would have deleted a provision allowing for nearly automatic license revocation for drivers who refused to take a Breathalyzer™ test when stopped by the police. MADD staged actions in front of Hawaii's Eternal Flame war memorial on Memorial Day and pointed out the "flaw in the law" to the press and the public. The messages were framed to create the belief that we should remember not only those killed in war but also those killed on the highways and that enactment of the flawed law would enable drunk drivers to avoid punishment. The speech podium for the event carried phone numbers of the governor's and senate president's office, and within a week, thousands of phone calls had been received there. Accompanied with grassroots campaigns to collect signatures on petitions and promote phone calls to legislators, MADD ultimately made sure the provision was deleted. This case offers a good example of how media advocacy can be a successful approach to obtaining media coverage and public awareness and to achieving a goal of promoting an important issue or supporting a public policy.

—I-Huei Cheng

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Agenda Setting; Anti-Drug Media Campaigns; Media Effects; Media Literacy (various entries); Public Health Campaigns; Schema Theory; Television, Prosocial Content of

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MEDIA CELEBRITIES

Much of young people's media consumption is driven by celebrities. Movie actresses, sports heroes, music performers, models, and television performers attract children and adolescents to the media. They are important agents of media socialization, frequent issues in peer communication, and objects of admiration. Celebrities provide orientation and social information to young audiences and shape their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors significantly.

CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES

Various theories address the relation between young people and media celebrities. McCutcheon, Lange, and Houran recently introduced the concept of *celebrity worship* and distinguished intensities of commitment with a celebrity, which range from mild forms (such as keeping informed about a celebrity) to extreme and pathological forms (such as overidentification and obsession with a media star). Hoffner investigated *wishful identification,* which refers to young media users' imagining that they are like or actually are a media character. This notion thus includes elements of positive admiration and imitation of star behavior. Yet another body of theory is parasocial interaction and relationships (PSI/PSR). PSI/PSR research has demonstrated that young media users perceive and process media characters in ways similar to individuals from their real social environment. PSI/PSRs can display highly diverse qualities, including admiration and idolization, but also negative dispositions (e.g., toward singers performing a disliked style of music). The concept thus can encompass a range of attachments from weak ties between audience and celebrity to very intense relationships. Cohen, for instance, reports that teenagers suffer from breakups of PSRs with favorite TV performers (e.g., if the celebrity disappears from a TV series), which indicates the affective relevance of such relationships, especially for young people. Overall, a variety of similar theoretical models of the involvement of young audiences with media celebrities have been advanced, and they do not necessarily assume solely idolization as the major quality of such involvement.

IMPACT OF CELEBRITIES ON IDENTITY FORMATION

Young people's interest in media celebrities has raised the questions of whether and how such media relationships contribute to identity development. Boon and Lomore report that strong commitment to media celebrities (even for characters that are fictional or dead) is common among adolescents. Most important, a substantial portion of their sample of young people reported that the bond with their favorite celebrity had motivated them to change parts of their identity. For

instance, 60% of the respondents said that their preferred celebrity had altered their personal attitudes and values, and almost 15% confirmed that they had changed their appearance to become more similar to their idol. Inspired by their favorite celebrity, many respondents also modified their lifestyle and engaged in activities their idol had framed in a desirable way. These findings suggest that social learning as described by Bandura is the most likely psychological mechanism behind the effects of celebrities on identity formation.

Brown, Basil, and Bocarnea studied audience responses to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. They found that involvement with Diana not only increased use of media content related to her death, but also facilitated a worse image of the tabloid press, whose paparazzi were considered by some to be partly responsible for Diana's lethal accident. This study thus demonstrated the effect of involvement with an idol on specific attitudes. Overall, the literature suggests that stars are important agents of adolescent identity development and socialization. Direct effects are accompanied by indirect effects of celebrities on youth culture (e.g., the impact of hip-hop celebrities on American gang style), which add to the overall relevance of media idols on young audiences. The determinants of the quality and intensity of young people's parasocial relationships with celebrities (as well as the determinants of the actual celebrity preferred) remain to be investigated in more detail, however.

CONSEQUENCES

Because of the frequent and intense admirer-celebrity relationships found among young people, a variety of beneficial and problematic consequences can arise from those relationships. For instance, corporate and social agents use celebrities to influence young audiences for their purposes: Celebrity endorsement has emerged as a key technique in product marketing. Celebrity support for political parties and leaders has been found to evoke political attitude change in young audiences. And worship for slim celebrities can cause negative effects on young media users' body image. It is, therefore, reasonable to continue research on celebrity idolization (and other forms of parasocial relationships) and its consequences for young people and to advise parents and teachers to keep informed about the social (and potentially intimate) bonds with celebrities that children and adolescents create, maintain, and break up.

—Christoph Klimmt

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media Fan Cultures; Gender Identity Development; Loneliness; Music, Group Identity and; Music, Personal Identity and; Parasocial Interaction; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of; Soap Operas, Effects of; Social Learning Theory/ Social Cognitive Theory; Socialization and Media; Television, Morality and Identification With Characters on; Youth Culture

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MEDIA EDUCATION, FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN

Media education refers to intentional efforts of teachers at school or of parents in families to influence, teach, and help to train children and adolescents to become media literate. *Media socialization* in a broader sense refers to the whole of the mostly nonintentional and longitudinal processes of accessing, selecting, and using a variety of different media in the family, with peers, and at school, and to the effects of these processes on children and adolescents. Explicit media education, based on a curriculum and intended to realize media literacy as a positive outcome, is predominantly practiced in the context of school, whereas nonsystematic and unplanned processes of media socialization characterize most family settings. There seems to be a shift from explicit family media education in the form of negative and restrictive parental control of children's media use to more positive and participatory forms of media socialization based on mutual communication between parents and children. This shift from external control to internal self-regulation reflects a tendency to see media not only in a negative way as a potential threat but also as a productive resource for the development of children's identity.

MEDIA LITERACY

Resulting from media education and media socialization, *media literacy* is a complex and manifold competence that is conceptualized and defined in various ways by different scholars based on diverse theoretical approaches. In general, it is understood as the ability to access, select, understand, analyze, and evaluate as well as to create and to communicate media messages. But depending on the specific theoretical premises of media literacy, the focus may be on the critical and ideological evaluation of media messages or on the appreciation of its aesthetic and formal features. In addition to this message orientation, other more media-centered approaches accentuate that media literacy is about understanding the technological, economical, political, and cultural structures, processes, and constraints of the modern media system—that is, being able to understand how media function in society. More user-specific concepts emphasize media use as intentional, active, and need-oriented social behavior. The goal of media education consequently is the self-confident and determinate media user, who is not dependent on or addicted to media but who uses the media and their messages as positive resources in creative and social responsible ways.

THE CHANGING FAMILY MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Children and young people access and use media primarily in the family context, especially during early childhood, and a plentitude of media is accessible in most families today. The modern home has become the site and focal point of a multimedia culture. In the 1970s, there was a significant shift from print media to audiovisual or screen culture; and in recent years, the modern household has been increasingly transformed by new computer-based interactive media such as the Internet. This ongoing transformation of the family media environment was accompanied by both anxieties and optimistic expectations. Pessimists such as Neil Postman lamented the end of childhood, the decay of print culture, and the loss of traditional values and the socializing role of the family as a consequence of the dominance of television entertainment. On the other hand, computer industry leaders such as Bill Gates or new media experts such as Nicholas Negroponte optimistically foresee and stress new educational possibilities and participatory opportunities for the so-called digital generation.

As a result of the contradictory public discourse, media educational goals and strategies of parents are often insecure and contradictory. Empirical research demonstrates that especially upper-class and privileged families have positive attitudes toward print media and stress books in their media education by buying books for children and reading aloud to them. Television education is an even more fundamental part of family education. The use and functions of television structure the daily routines of family life but also create considerable conflict between parents and children. One important cause is parental uncertainty about whether and how to regulate television use, together with negative attitudes toward television as an educational tool. But very often, parental guidance and control address only the time and amount of children's viewing. Furthermore, this is done in a more or less strict way only in early childhood, and most parents do not focus on understanding and interpreting television content. As a result, the main goal of family media education often is to protect vulnerable youth from

negative media influences but not to teach them actively how to select and use media in a competent, creative, and responsible way. According to a 1999 Kaiser Family Foundation report, a surprising amount of children's media use in the United States is unsupervised; this is certainly influenced by the fact that a third of children between 2 and 7 years old and two thirds of older children have a TV in their bedroom.

Although the recent diffusion of modern interactive media has created new uncertainties, it was accompanied by mostly positive parental expectations. Therefore, diffusion and adoption of personal computers and the Internet took place more rapidly in affluent families, and as a result, gaps in access to new media increased. On the other hand, research shows that young people use the computer and the Internet mostly for entertainment purposes and to communicate with others, but rarely for educational reasons.

QUESTIONS AND RESULTS OF RESEARCH

Most research in the domain of media, children, and family is still descriptive. It focuses on the availability, uses, and functions of the different media in the family environment. In addition, newer studies are also theoretically oriented, for example, the Young People New Media project in more than a dozen European countries. The focus of this Livingstone study is the changing media environment of today's children and its consequences for uses and functions of old and new media. A special research question deals with the diffusion of information and communication technology. The leading research hypothesis is that higher socioeconomic segments generally are more motivated and able to acquire and use new media first because of financial resources, innovativeness, or educational expectations. As a result, the "haves" are better able to take advantage of these new media developments than the "have-nots," and existing inequalities in access and use will widen. Besides these social disparities, there are also gender gaps: Boys seem to be more fascinated by computers or the Internet than girls. But it is still unclear if these gaps will persist or if there will be a trickle-down effect as there was for the telephone and television in the past.

The study also analyzes differences between several types of households. *Media-rich homes* have greater than average access to a wide variety of old and new media: books, television, VCR, personal computers, Internet, or telephone. These households tend to be middle class, and parents in these homes claim to feel comfortable using computers themselves. In contrast, ownership of media in *traditional homes* is average for all media except the newest, such as computers or the Internet. But the main reason seems to be not financial but attitudes toward media and the family life cycle, for example, the absence of older children. Parents in traditional homes generally feel that television provides children with good programs and that children's viewing is appropriately controlled. Television and VCR are common in *media-poor homes*, but access to all other media is under average. These households are likely working class and poorer.

Other questions deal with different value orientations and styles of parental media education—for example, authoritative versus participatory—and their relations to regulation of children's media use or to interpersonal discussions with children about media topics. In a similar way, Chaffee and McLeod in the 1970s and Lull in the 1980s developed theoretical approaches dealing not so much with explicit media educational goals and practices of parents, but more with different family communication patterns such as laissez-faire, protective, pluralistic, or consensual. Empirical studies have indicated that the amount of television viewing by parents is correlated with the TV viewing of their children. But this parental modeling effect is mediated by family communication patterns. For example, it was hypothesized that children in socially oriented families would use television to fulfill integrative functions whereas concept-oriented families would use television more for educational purposes.

—Heinz Bonfadelli

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Media Education, Schools and; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Socialization and Media; Youth Culture

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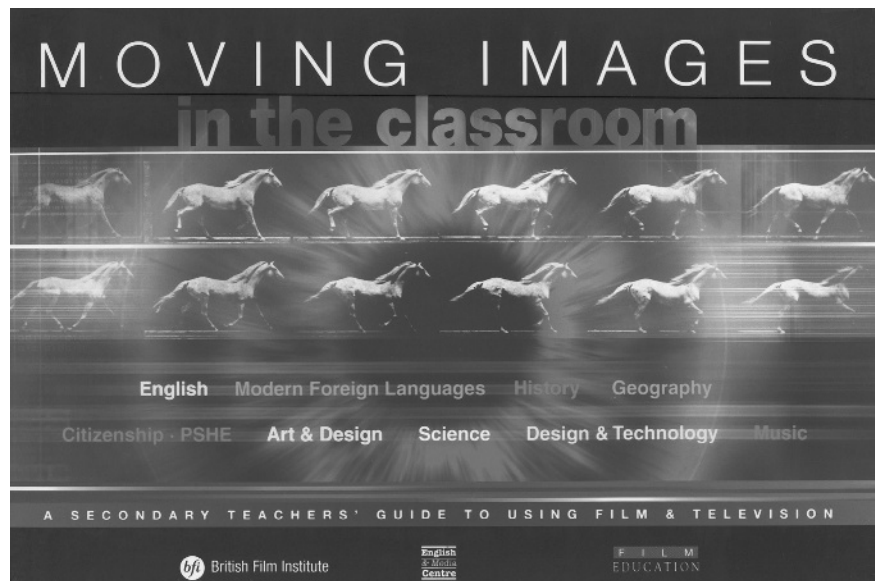
MEDIA EDUCATION, INTERNATIONAL

Media education is a term used to refer to the process involved in learning how to critically analyze and create media messages. The term originated in England, where it is generally synonymous with *media literacy*. The widespread use of the term *media education* arose, in part, as a result of the challenges associated with translating the term *literacy* into various world languages.

PROGRAMS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Most people would agree that Great Britain has the most well-established program of media literacy education in the world. Media education, which first appeared in the 1930s in England, grew out of a classical tradition of literary criticism that established a premise that modern society and its cultural manifestations were alienating and mechanistic. According to this view, young people needed to be protected from the deadening and distracting dimensions of mass media and popular culture. It was thought this could be accomplished by providing them with concepts and skills needed to discriminate between the elite culture of the literary tradition and newer media-based cultural forms. In the 1950s and 1960s, Richard Hoggart's book, *The Uses of Literacy,* and Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel's book, *The Popular Arts,* signaled the beginning of a shift in thinking among scholars, who began moving away from making a "high culture/low culture" dichotomy toward analyzing the media through an examination of authorship, audience reception, meaning making, and cultural identity in a sociocultural context. With the rise of British cultural studies in the 1970s, a number of scholars and practitioners began to focus on the pedagogical dimensions of teaching about media. Journals such as *Screen Education* provided educators with opportunities to share, reflect on, and formalize ideas from the experimental teaching that was widely under way as film and popular media began to be used more widely in the classroom with children, adolescents, and young adults. In 1985, Len Masterman's book, *Teaching the Media,* became widely influential, reaching an international audience of scholars and educators with interests in media literacy. By 1989, media education was a compulsory part of British education and located as a subject area within English. Many organizations have been important in supporting the work of teachers and students, including the British Film Institute, the English and Media Centre, the Institute on Education at London University, and many others.

Students in England can take courses and examinations in media studies at both the GCSE and A-levels. GCSE is the first academic program for adolescents, usually culminating at age 16. The A-level examination is the academic flagship of the education program for those between 16 and 18 years old in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. A-levels enable those



Moving Images in the Classroom is a curriculum resource developed by the British Film Institute to help strengthen students' skills of critical analysis in responding to images in the secondary classroom. It includes eight instructional practices that can easily be used by teachers with most films, documentaries, and other audiovisual materials. The curriculum resource is available free from the website of the British Film Institute, Education Division, at http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/miic.

SOURCE: http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/miic.

who wish to remain in school or college after the age of compulsory schooling to continue their education for another 2 years. An A-level student in media studies could expect to cover topics such as the Hollywood studio system, the history of public service broadcasting in the United Kingdom, marketing in the music industry, and gender in teen magazines. Students would face the challenge of creating a media product as a member of a creative team and would learn to apply analytic concepts including media institutions, languages, audiences, and representation, referencing theories such as uses and gratifications or narrative structures. Even in Great Britain, media education leaders acknowledge that there is still little formal initial training for teachers and too little emphasis on media literacy at the elementary level.

ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL AGENCIES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Some media education initiatives exist as part of the mission of a national agency, as in the case of CLEMI, the French national organization for media and education. It was created in 1983 with the mission of developing teacher training activities to encourage the use of news media and promoting young people's ability to better understand the world and develop critical thinking skills. CLEMI provides educational training to more than 15,000 teachers annually.

Some European nations have established grassroots organizations, like the MED, the Italian Media Education Association, which has an active organization of scholars and educators involved in creating and implementing curricula, providing teacher education, and conducting research. Recently, an online network for media educators, Media-Educ, was formed to foster the development of stronger and more coherent media education initiatives in Europe. At a 2004 conference held in Belfast, Northern Ireland, participants explored questions concerning the curricular location of media education in schools, approaches to teacher education, relationships between media educators and professional media organizations, and the value of practical media production work for students. A number of Scandinavian and Eastern European nations, including Sweden, Russia, and Hungary, have educators who are implementing media literacy education with the support of scholars and activists in those nations.

The European Union has also provided support for media education. In 1989, education ministers of the European Union recognized the principle of media education as a basic entitlement of every citizen from the earliest years of schooling. Since then, most European nations have included some kind of requirement for media education in their school curricula. Regulatory bodies have developed an interest in media education as a counterbalance to the increasingly complex problem of media regulation in a digital age, and there has been some corporate interest in sponsoring media education activity.

MEDIA EDUCATION IN CANADA

Media literacy has a long history in Canada, where the Ontario-based Association for Media Literacy has supported the work of educators there since 1978. This organization maintains a website, publishes a newsletter, and organizes conferences, summer institutes, and workshops for teachers, and its success has inspired the creation of similar associations in eight other provinces.

MEDIA EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) is an independent, nonprofit, professional association in Australia for media teachers and others who wish to use media effectively in their classrooms. ATOM aims to foster and encourage a generation of students who are both multiliterate and technologically savvy. The organization sponsors competitions for student-produced multimedia, provides opportunities for teacher education, and hosts statewide conferences.

MEDIA EDUCATION IN ASIA

In most of Asia, media literacy is still in an initial stage of development. Media educators in Japan, Korea, and other Asian nations work primarily in nonschool settings or promote media literacy as a component of parent education. In 2005, a 4-day conference was held in China to introduce the concept of media literacy and to explore how parents and teachers can help teach young people to critically evaluate the media.

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS: UNESCO

International cooperation has helped to create a worldwide movement for media literacy education. In 1982, a group of educators from more than a dozen nations met under the auspices of UNESCO at the

first international symposium on media education at Grunwald, Federal Republic of Germany. This group declared,

> Rather than condemn or endorse the undoubted power of the media, we need to accept their significant impact and penetration throughout the world as an established fact, and also appreciate their importance as an element of culture in today's world. The role of communication and media in the process of development should not be underestimated, nor the function of media as instruments for the citizen's active participation in society. Political and educational systems need to recognize their obligations to promote in their citizens a critical understanding of the phenomena of communication.

UNESCO has continued to sponsor international gatherings of media literacy educators worldwide and, partly as a result of these conferences, media literacy has begun to emerge in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia. International conferences on media education have been effective in building a coalition of leaders in many nations. This has resulted in some experimental cross-national initiatives that bring teachers and students from several countries into contact using media production and media analysis activities. It is anticipated that such initiatives will continue to develop in the 21st century.

—Renee Hobbs

See also Media Education, Family Involvement in; Media Education, Schools and; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in; Media Literacy Programs

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MEDIA EDUCATION, POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND

Media contribute to political socialization by providing youth with perspectives that give them a foothold in the political system. Information obtained from news media allows adolescents to form opinions, to talk about politics, and to gain motivation for civic participation. However, children and teenagers must pay attention to news media if they are to benefit. Educators and activists lament an erosion of youth interest in public affairs and sinking rates of youth exposure to newspapers and television news. In recent years, a more optimistic picture has come into focus with successful innovations that incorporate media in community activism and in civic education.

RESEARCH ON MEDIA IN POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Political socialization is the process by which young people acquire knowledge, dispositions, and social

Students at Franklin Elementary School in Wausau, Wisconsin, voted on Election Day 2004 as part of an activity sponsored by Kids Voting USA. In this innovative curriculum, students monitor political advertisements and candidate statements in media during the final weeks before Election Day. Classroom discussion about news coverage allows students to refine opinions as they prepare for their first voting experience.

SOURCE: © KidsVotingUSA.org. Photographer: Bill Forbes.

skills that allow them to participate effectively in civic affairs. The origin of empirical research on civic development is often traced to Herbert Hyman's book *Political Socialization*, published in 1959. Through the 1960s and 1970s, researchers mostly ignored media as a contributing factor in political development, and families were viewed as the most important influence on this process. This assumption seemed reasonable given the many years in which parents could directly or indirectly communicate cues about politics. Scholars presumed that children would readily adopt the partisan identification of parents along with other orientations such as political tolerance, confidence in government, and support for voting. However, researchers found that the influence of families was quite minimal, beyond modest correlations for party preference. Scholarship during this era also explored the effects of schools. Once again, the results were meager. Beyond the direct transmission of textbook knowledge, the civics curriculum appeared mostly inconsequential in political development.

Researchers in communication began to investigate influences of mass media in the 1970s. In one study, investigators asked teenagers to rate parents, teachers, friends, and media according to their value in providing information and personal opinions on current affairs. Media stood out as the most important source for both information and opinions. Subsequent research confirmed that habitual media exposure is a robust predictor of adolescents' knowledge about issues, parties, and government.

PATTERNS OF MEDIA USE

Although television and newspapers often reinforce each other as socializing agents, they are used for distinct purposes in political learning. A child is typically introduced to public affairs through TV, beginning with attention to sports and weather. TV news is easier to comprehend than newspaper content, allowing viewers to pick up discrete bits of information such as the names of candidates. For children, broadcast news exposure is more strongly related to political knowledge than is print news.

TV consequently represents a bridge to politics, providing easy access. But for children to achieve higher levels of political sophistication, they must supplement or replace TV with newspaper reading as they enter adolescence. Print media offer greater depth in news coverage, allowing readers to comprehend political processes and to integrate disparate ideas. Newspaper readingfor most children begins in elementary school with exposure to the comics and sports pages. The biggest jump in newspaper reading occurs at ages 10 to 12, when reading skills are typically mastered. Higher stages of cognitive development increase the likelihood of newspaper reading as content becomes easier to comprehend.

REFINEMENTS IN THEORY

Contemporary theorists reject a transmission model in which children and teenagers simply absorb information from TV, newspapers, and the Internet. Instead, media are consequential in civic development by virtue of how they are incorporated in primary groups. Children and adolescents must actively *use* the news in interpersonal communication to fully benefit from media exposure. In this regard, families, schools, and peer groups represent overlapping spheres for civic development to the extent that adolescents share knowledge and exchange opinions obtained from media. Thus, the most optimal learning occurs when media exposure occurs in concert with the testing and validation of opinions in conversation. Both news attention and discussion are necessary for adolescents to shape raw impressions into refined perspectives.

INNOVATIONS AND REFORM

However, the potential for media to contribute to political development has scarcely been realized in the United States. With interest in news waning, young people increasingly rely on late-night comedy and other entertainment programs for political information. Not surprisingly, surveys show that the extent of adolescents' knowledge of public affairs is, at best, worrisome. Educators have responded by experimenting with ways to engage youth via media use and media production. In the Kids Voting USA curriculum, for example, students dissect campaign advertisements and monitor news coverage of candidates during election campaigns. Michael McDevitt and Steven Chaffee found that these activities prompt adolescents to initiate conversations with parents about election issues. These discussions, in turn, motivate parents to pay more attention to news as they anticipate future conversations. This "trickle-up influence" is particularly evident in families of low socioeconomic status, where parents were typically not socialized to politics in their own youth. Students' media use in the home thereby offers low-income parents a second chance at citizenship.

Media literacy—the ability to analyze, evaluate, and produce media of various types—represents

another promising strategy for cultivating civic growth. Communication scholar Robert Kubey notes that the United States trails other English-speaking nations in media education, and recent research shows that civic curricula are particularly effective when rooted in media literacy. Examples of this approach include students producing documentaries on community issues, broadcasting their own news programs, and using websites to compare candidate positions. In an era in which citizenship is increasingly expressed through electronic and digital forums, media literacy is likely to become a higher priority for civic education.

—Michael McDevitt

See also Media Education, Schools and; Media Effects; Media Literacy Programs; News, Children's Exposure to; News, Children's Responses to

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MEDIA EDUCATION, SCHOOLS AND

With the media occupying such a large presence of the daily lives of children and teens, calls have been issued for schools to take up the study of media, beginning as early as kindergarten and continuing through 12th grade. Proponents of media education in the classroom argue that in the modern world, the subject of the media deserves a place alongside more traditional topics such as social studies, science, and math. The term *media education* is often used synonymously with *media literacy,* describing endeavors that entail learning to "read" the media in an informed manner and with a healthy dose of skepticism.

DEFINITION AND DEBATES

Despite the calls for media education in schools, researchers, teachers, parents, and others have had difficulty agreeing on how this should be accomplished. Should media education adopt a protectionist tone (e.g., "you shouldn't watch that"), or will that turn young people off and make them resistant to the curriculum? How political should media education be, especially if it is conducted in public schools? Should negative effects of media on children and teens be emphasized, or should positive roles and media appreciation take center stage? Does media education include learning how to make media (e.g., learning audio or video production or how to make a website), or is media analysis the primary concern (e.g., developing and applying critical thinking skills)?

While these and other debates continue, a basic definition of media literacy has been offered by Patricia Aufderheide. It states that media literacy is the ability to create, access, analyze, and evaluate the media in all its forms. Aufderheide also identified a small list of key aspects. Media education should help young people learn that media "construct reality," which basically means that media shape understandings and interpretations of the world. It should promote comprehension of the ways in which media portrayals are unrealistic (or are "constructions of reality"). Media education should advance knowledge of the potentially complex and varying ways that media affect audiences. It should help students to understand *how* media are made as well as *why* they are made (which introduces discussion of the commercial enterprise of making media). Finally, media education should foster awareness that media messages have inherent values associated with them. For instance, the relative absence of an ethnic group from prime-time television can serve to devalue the group, whereas the abundance of commercial messages in media can promote consumerism as a positive value.

EXAMPLES AND EFFECTIVENESS

A number of media education curricula have been implemented in schools with both children and teens, and the effects of these efforts have been studied using social scientific research methods. The curricula vary widely in terms of age group targeted, the topic that they take on, and the exercises and assignments that they entail. Yet, they share a common objective: to increase critical thinking about media, often with the desire to intervene in media effects.

Advertising

A small number of published studies exist on the role of school-based media education in bolstering students' resistance to advertising. In one study conducted by Renee Hobbs and Richard Frost, 11th graders participated in a lengthy curriculum with an emphasis on the critical analysis of advertisements (among other topics). Later, participants were more likely than control-group members to be able to identify the purpose of an ad, its target audience, and the techniques used to create it. In studies by Erica Weintraub Austin and colleagues, media literacy training among third graders led to enhanced understanding of tobacco advertising techniques, diminished perception that most young people use tobacco, and increased endorsement of anti-tobacco advocacy.

Violence

A handful of media education studies on media violence have been published. Lawrence and Sharon Rosenkoetter and colleagues gave first through third graders a lengthy curriculum on the topic, which included such exercises as learning about special effects and discussing lack of realism. Rowell Huesmann and colleagues had slightly older children complete a shorter curriculum that included writing an essay about why television violence can be harmful. In Erica Scharrer's study, sixth graders participated in a five-lesson curriculum that discussed ways of portraying violence that are likely to encourage negative effects (e.g., as accompanied by rewards, as occurring with few consequences) and applied these ideas to a series of clips. The research evidence from these and other studies shows increases in knowledge about and critical attitudes toward media violence among media education participants, as well as decreases in identification with aggressive characters or aggression.

Body Image

Feeling dissatisfied with one's weight or the way one looks is another negative media effect that media education interventions have attempted to remedy. In a study conducted by Heidi Fuller and colleagues, fourth graders participated in a curriculum in which they discussed how computers can digitally enhance models' appearance and how unrealistic female characters appear in Disney films. In focus groups, media literacy participants were more likely to give careful thought to media portrayals of beauty and bodies compared to those in a control group. A 10-lesson media literacy and eating disorder prevention program with 9-to-11-year-olds, studied by Michael Levine and associates, included units on the analysis of nutrition and weight messages in commercials. After participating, students had gained knowledge on the topic, and the older participants displayed more positive attitudes toward overweight people compared to control-group members.

OBSTACLES

Despite these promising studies, the incorporation of media education into the day-to-day agenda of kindergarten through 12th-grade classrooms in the United States has been sporadic and slow going. Although every state now lists media literacy in its curricular framework (thereby showing a certain degree of "buy-in"), teachers often are not given the training or resources necessary to systematically integrate it into the classroom. Thus, in the adoption of media education in schools, the United States lags considerably behind other countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Overall, media education holds much promise for providing children and teenagers with the tools they need to deconstruct the media. Although a number of barriers and debates have marked its growth, there is mounting evidence that educating young people about the media in school can have a positive effect on their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

—Erica Scharrer

See also Center for Media Education (CME); Digital Literacy; Media Education, Family Involvement in; Media Education, International; Media Education Foundation; Media Literacy Programs

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MEDIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Media Education Foundation (MEF) is a nonprofit organization that produces and distributes educational videos designed to promote critical thought, conversations, and activism about media and culture. Founded in 1991 by University of Massachusetts Amherst Professor Sut Jhally, the organization takes up issues of media consolidation, consumer culture, and media depictions. Its mission is "to answer the challenge posed by the radical and accelerating corporate threat to democracy," according to a recent catalog and brochure. The videos typically feature footage from the media content in question (e.g., music videos, news coverage, television programs, video games, etc.), deconstructed by experts, scholars, and activists who discuss research findings and make critical observations pertaining to the topic.

Professor Jhally's first video, *Dreamworlds*, was an incisive critique of the music video industry and its depiction of women and girls. A legal move to stop its distribution, which was later withdrawn, brought considerable media attention to his research and inspired the creation of the Media Education Foundation. Now, staff at MEF estimate that more than 2 million college students have seen the popular video; a third updated installment, titled *Dreamworlds 3: Desire, Sex, and Power in Music Videos*, was released in 2006. The MEF catalog currently includes dozens of videos, with new titles continually in the works.

Among the other bestsellers in the MEF catalog are the *Killing Us Softly* videos, featuring media critic Jean Kilbourne's critical assessment of gender in advertising. The third installment in the series, *Killing Us Softly 3: Advertising's Image of Women*, was released by MEF in 2000. Another top seller is *Tough Guise: Violence, Media, & the Crisis in Masculinity*, in which Jackson Katz, a leading anti-violence educator who has worked with professional sports teams and other groups of men, raises issues of school and dating violence and the portrayal of masculinity in the media. Other MEF videos have taken on a wide range of social and cultural issues including (but not limited to) media representations of alcohol and drinking (*Spin the Bottle*), of social class (*Class Dismissed: How TV Frames the Working Class*), of body and beauty (*Slim Hopes: Advertising & the Obsession With Thinness*), and of gays and lesbians (*Off the Straight and Narrow: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals & Television*).

Another MEF production *Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear & the Selling of American Empire,* released in 2004, discussed U.S. foreign policy and media coverage of the events of September 11, 2001, and the war in Iraq. It met with widespread critical acclaim. The video also expanded the audience for MEF videos beyond the usual high school and college or university setting. *Hijacking Catastrophe* opened in select movie theaters across the country, was reviewed in a number of mainstream and alternative media outlets, and has sold an unprecedented number of copies.

MEF also offers free educational resources on its website for educators to use in the classroom as supplements to the videos. Discussion questions, media literacy activities, summaries of the topics covered in the videos, exercises for research and writing, and links to additional sources are available. In addition to those resources, the MEF website features interviews with media scholars and activists, news updates, and clips from each of the organization's videos.

—Erica Scharrer

See also Center for Media Education; Media Advocacy; Media Education, Schools and

WEBSITE

Media Education Foundation: www.mediaed.org

MEDIA EFFECTS

Research on how children respond to media and on the nature of media effects still is most extensive with regard to the effects of television viewing on children's development. There rarely is one universal effect of media use, but specific aspects of such use may predict positive or negative outcomes in at least some children and teenagers. Recent surveys of time spent with various media suggest that television remains the dominant medium, beginning very early in childhood and extending through adolescence. Total media consumption and total television viewing by children and youth have changed little over the last several years, suggesting a source of stability in effects on development.

At the same time, the pace of change in media availability, in the functions of media, and in the portability of media far outstrips that of research into media effects. Patterns of media consumption reflect increasing specialization, as children and teenagers show more frequent use of cable channels and selectively recorded programs. The increased presence of media in children's bedrooms, greater storage capability of media devices, and extensive use of wireless technology and cellular telephone functions have provided children and teenagers with greater access to media; this access has been accompanied by a sharp increase in media multitasking. Despite numerous studies of the effects of television on children's development, what we know about media effects in general and effects of television in particular must be viewed as subject to change as technologies and the power and functions of media in children's lives continue to evolve.

EFFECTS ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, AND ACHIEVEMENT

Concerns about television's potential harm to children's thinking and school achievement and hopes for its potential educational benefits have existed virtually since the medium's introduction. There are several bases for worries about risks to cognitive development and education. One hypothesis is that extensive early exposure to electronic media may affect brain development in infants and toddlers, leading to adverse effects on cognitive development. Although some studies report negative associations between the total amount of very early exposure to television and measures of language and attentional abilities, effects of some content can be positive, and no specific evidence of effects on early brain development has been produced.

A second explanation for potential negative effects is founded on a distinction between foreground and background television. The former refers to programming produced for young children and often selected by them or their parents for intentional viewing, whereas the latter consists of programming produced for a general audience, which serves as a backdrop for children's other activities. Background television may constitute the bulk of television exposure among infants and toddlers, a situation even more the case before the advent of television programs (e.g., *Teletubbies*) and videos (e.g., *Baby Einstein*) designed specifically for this youngest age group. Whereas the question remains open as to whether foreground television can be used productively with a very young audience, there is growing evidence that background television is disruptive to toddlers' play behavior and social interaction and that an early rearing environment characterized by more background noise is associated with poorer cognitive development. Television as a major component of background noise is a common phenomenon for very young children who live in households where television is left on most of the time, and according to a Kaiser Foundation study, this situation may exist in nearly half of U.S. households.

A third basis for concerns about negative effects on cognitive development and achievement throughout childhood and adolescence is displacement theory, which proposes that time spent with television takes time away from more valuable activities, such as reading and imaginative play. Evidence supporting this proposal is mixed. In a number of studies, children who view TV most heavily seem to spend less time engaged in activities that encourage cognitive development and, in turn, show the lowest achievement. For light to moderate television viewers, program content, family interaction, and opportunities for other activities moderate television's effects on children's achievement and creativity. It also should be noted that some studies find positive associations among usage levels of various media, with children who report higher television use also reporting more time spent reading and using computers and with no association between television viewing and grades in school.

What of television's potential educational benefits? Limited evidence suggests that viewing of specific programs contributes positively to very young children's vocabulary development. For preschoolers, there is substantial evidence of language learning and increases

in school readiness. A growing number of programs for preschool children (e.g., *Sesame Street, Blue's Clues,* and *Dora the Explorer*) have well-articulated curricula and are informed by research on young children's attention and comprehension. Such programs are associated with growth in problem solving, flexible thinking, literacy, and vocabulary development, with some of these effects translating to long-term positive effects on educational achievement. Programs designed for school-age children also have been successful in teaching skills and increasing familiarity with content areas but must contend with the additional challenge of maintaining older children's interest with a compelling narrative while blending educational content with the narrative structure. The growing Internet usage by children and teens (including time shared with television and responding to what they are watching on television) offers future avenues for engaging older children in beneficial activities.

EFFECTS ON SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

Concern regarding television's effects on children's social development has been most apparent in the long-standing debate over the link between televised violence and children's aggression, but it extends to other areas, such as development of gender and ethnic stereotypes and the comprehension and expression of emotions. Several overlapping theories suggest why television content may exert effects in these areas.

Arousal theory emphasizes physiological responses that can be produced by television programs. Programs causing emotions also produce bodily responses, such as increased heart rate from excitement during a violent or suspenseful show. Although there are individual and age differences, the excitement of shows that produce physical arousal will attract many children. However, arousal theory also predicts that with increased exposure, children need stronger stimulation to reach the same level of arousal and emotional reactions and so can become desensitized to violence and other themes that provoke emotions. In support of this perspective, children show reduced responses to real-life aggression after viewing televised violence.

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory asserts that children learn many social behaviors by observing those modeled by others. Factors that increase children's likelihood of trying a behavior include whether they can identify with the person modeling the behavior and whether the model succeeds in achieving a goal or in obtaining a reward. Heavy exposure to television characters who achieve goals by behaving in aggressive, violent, or stereotypical ways may encourage children to use similar strategies in their own lives. Numerous studies provide evidence that heavy exposure to televised violence is linked to increased aggressive behavior in children and adolescents.

Script theories address ways in which television influences the development of children's knowledge and beliefs about the world. Based on experiences with real and media events, children construct generalized representations of what to expect in certain situations or of certain people. In turn, children's expectations may guide their behaviors. Children who observe frequent aggressive solutions to conflict situations are more likely to expect others to behave aggressively. One specific version of script theory, cultivation theory, proposes that heavy viewing leads people to see the world as it is portrayed on television. For example, television programs overrepresent the occurrence of violence and exaggerate the presence and the power of white males. Consistent with cultivation theory, heavy viewers are relatively likely to see the world as mean and threatening and to develop ethnic and gender stereotypes.

Some evidence supports each of these theories. However, results from any single study cannot establish a clear causal link *from* television *to* a particular behavior. The strongest argument is possible when multiple sources of evidence based on multiple methods converge, as has occurred for the conclusion that viewing televised violence contributes to aggressive behavior. Even in this case, heavy viewing of violent television is documented as only one contributor to the development of aggressive behavior, and it is most likely to affect children who are prone to aggressive behavior for other reasons (e.g., children growing up in contexts in which aggression is viewed as a relatively acceptable response to conflict).

An additional question concerning media effects on social development concerns potential associations of media use and developing social relationships. A recent Kaiser Foundation survey of media use among 8-to-18-year-olds revealed that children and adolescents who reported spending more time using media also reported spending more time with their parents and in pursuing other hobbies. This finding may reflect one more aspect of media multitasking: that children and teens find media use a comfortable context for spending time with parents. However, it does not reveal the quality of parent-child interactions or other aspects of social relationships. These investigators also

reported that heavy media users are less likely to talk out problems with parents and that the children and teens who reported least contentment with their lives also spent more time playing video games and less time reading than their more contented peers. Another factor connecting media use to social relationships may relate to variations in how media are used in different households. Analogous to disruption by background television of play behavior and parent-child interactions among very young children, responses to the survey suggested potentially more disruption from media in households where media use is unregulated and television is left on most of the time.

EFFECTS ON HEALTH BEHAVIORS

As children develop and move through adolescence, they make a growing number of choices that influence health, choices that may become part of a long-term lifestyle. Early in development, children's health-related choices may include preferences for particular foods, participation in physical activities, and decisions to engage in risky activities. Later in childhood and in their teen years, choices expand to include the use of substances with health consequences such as tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs, as well as choices about sexual behaviors. Media use during childhood and adolescence, especially viewing of television and movies and music consumption, may contribute to the development of health-related knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

One potential mechanism for influence may stem from incidental effects of portrayals of health-related behaviors in entertainment media and in television product advertisements. Based on the three theoretical perspectives described earlier, portrayals of health-related behaviors might influence children's and adolescents' concepts of what is normal (in youth culture or in the adult world), what is acceptable, and what is associated with positive characteristics or responses from others.

Food preferences and physical activity. Advertising for food products targeted at children is likely to emphasize high-fat, high-sugar foods. The findings of some studies indicate that exposure to TV ads contributes to children's short-term and long-term food preferences, although parents' preferences exert stronger influence. There is some evidence that TV viewing as a *behavior* may relate to overweight and obesity during childhood and adolescence by contributing to decreases in physical activity and increases in calorie consumption, but other investigations report no relation or a positive relation between media use and physical activity.

Substance use and sexual behavior. Tobacco and drug use are portrayed infrequently on U.S. television programs, although somewhat more commonly in movies. Alcohol use is shown frequently in television programs and in movies and is promoted heavily in product ads, with both situations typically portraying alcohol use as a normative, problem-free adult behavior. The number of sexual scenes on television has nearly doubled since 1998, with many portrayals comic but others including references to commitment issues and safer sex. The effects of these portrayals are mixed; the most consistent finding is that the overall amount of viewing of entertainment television and advertising is related to positive alcohol expectancies and alcohol use among adolescents.

A second possible mechanism for influence is the use of mass media as a means to deliver intentional interventions to change or reinforce health-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Although a number of mass media efforts have failed to effect change, theoretically driven campaigns targeted at specific at-risk groups have reduced risky behaviors including tobacco use, drug use, and unprotected sex.

—Elizabeth P. Lorch

See also Media Effects, Family Interactions and; Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Effects, Models of; Media Exposure

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MEDIA EFFECTS, FAMILY INTERACTIONS AND

Communication is an essential, indispensable element for the formation and maintenance of families. Indeed, social interaction is the vehicle through which family members establish, maintain, and dissolve their intimate relationships. Within this unique social system, the mass media have become an integral, if not routine part of family life. This entry examines some aspects of how the mass media impact interactions within families, focusing on parents, children, and adolescents.

The typical American family home is permeated with media technologies, including multiple television and radio sets, media players, and computers systems, and often, the children are the most avid media consumers. A 2005 study of children 8 to 18 conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation found, for instance, that children spent almost 6½ hours daily using mass media. However, because many children used multiple media simultaneously (referred to as media multitasking), the average total exposure to all media exceeded 8½ hours each day. Media multitasking appears to be facilitated by an abundance of media technologies within the typical child's bedroom. A television (68%) with a VCR/DVD player and video game console (50%) are commonplace, and almost a third of the children in the Kaiser study reported having a computer in their bedroom, many with Internet access. Overall, 86% of the children indicated that there was at least one computer in their home, 75% with Internet access. At the same time, less than half (46%) of the children reported having any family rules about media use, with most of these children stating that such rules were rarely enforced.

The prominence of mass media in the lives of children and adolescents raises several questions: What effect do the media have on family communication? Do the mass media stimulate or impede family interactions? Do the mass media provide an electronic hearth around which family members can congregate or provide a barrier separating individuals? Interestingly, the body of research suggests the answer to all of these questions is yes, highlighting the fact that the relationship between mass media use and family communication is multifaceted and highly interdependent.

Although rapid changes in both the institution of the family and in mass media technologies are not well reflected in contemporary research, some conclusions can be advanced. First, how families define themselves and create a socially constructed set of roles, values, and norms exercises considerable influence over the media experiences of its members. Work explicating family communication patterns, for example, revealed that parents' values and norms regarding communication were predictive of family media habits. *Social-oriented* parents, for example, emphasize harmony, conformity, and getting along with others, and their families are most likely to use media for social purposes such as solidarity, companionship, and conversation. *Concept-oriented* parents, on the other hand, encourage expression of ideas, critical thinking, and open debate of opinions, and their families perceive the mass media as tools to instill values and facilitate constructive arguments.

During the 1950s, which are often referred to as the "Golden Age" of television, television was the mass media centerpiece around which the family often gathered. In many contemporary households, this traditional model of media effects on family interactions has been replaced by a rapidly escalating trend towards privatization of mass media use.

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Second, mass media have the potential to enhance family communication in several ways. Television, for example, can bring families together into a common social environment, foster a feeling of togetherness, and enrich nonverbal interactions between family members. More generally, the mass media can provide texts (e.g., stories, music, and jokes) that can stimulate family conversations and provide a reference point for discussion of sensitive and complex issues. This notion is illustrated by recent research showing that "teen Internet mavens"—savvy young Internet users who can quickly access product information—are exerting considerable influence in family economic decision-making processes. Furthermore, it has become relatively common practice to use text messaging, email, bulletin boards, and blogs to substantially expand both the quantity and quality of communication within the family, the extended family, and the family's broader social network.

Third, traditional models of media effects on family interactions, those that attribute a unique centrality to television within households, are no longer viable. The era of television as the mass media centerpiece around which the family gathers has been replaced by a rapidly escalating trend toward privatization of mass media use. Several studies, for example, have demonstrated that children with TVs in their bedrooms are less likely to engage in coviewing with other family members. Building on this evidence, many commentators have voiced concerns that the emergence of computers in children's bedrooms might further inhibit interaction and involvement among family members. As yet, however, evidence of this "social time displacement" notion is mixed. This may be due, at least in part, to the fact that incorporation of the computer within the family system does not necessarily require the negotiation of new family media habits but instead may only require modification of ones previously developed to accommodate the individualized use of earlier technologies such as TV and video games.

Finally, there is reason to suspect that the utility of the mass media as a physical and psychological obstacle allowing family members to avoid interaction with one another has been substantially enhanced in our contemporary media environment. It has long been recognized that television is often used by children and other family members as a way of coping with stress and heading off family tension. Recent research suggests, however, that a transition may have begun, and the Internet is increasingly becoming the medium of choice for many who seek refuge during difficult times within the family. Children and adolescents exhibiting excessive Internet use, for example, consistently display stress-related characteristics such as loneliness, anxiety, and low self-esteem, and for many, the Internet provides both an entertaining distraction and a safe communal environment. Adults, of course, can also exhibit obsessive Internet use for essentially the same reasons. Taken together, these considerations raise the possibility that for some, the Internet could offer an alluring alternative to family interaction, involvement, and problem solving, thus further exacerbating problems within a stressful or dysfunctional household.

—James B. Weaver, III and Stephanie Lee Sargent

See also Family Environment, Media Effects on; Kaiser Family Foundation; Media Effects (various entries); Media Entertainment; Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Television, Child Variables and Use of

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MEDIA EFFECTS, HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON

Since the study of media effects began during World War I, several different theories have served as the conceptual framework for this research. In the early days of scientific effects studies, many social critics assumed powerful and uniform media effects. In part, this was because of the historical bias in the popular press toward chronicling instances of powerful media effects. But some aspects of these assumptions about powerful effects reflected the prominence of stimulus-response models in psychology, and others emerged because of widespread public uncertainty and concern about the social and psychological impact of the new mass media, especially on children and adolescents. After the Depression, a limited-effects model emerged, ascribing to media consumers the ability to select and evaluate media. Following the 1960s, new perspectives evolved on the mechanisms of media effects, and research began to address cognitive, affective, and physiological effects as well as behavioral effects of media. Recent advances in research tools, statistical modeling, and methodological approaches, along with increased sophistication in theories of child and adolescent development, have combined to give communication scholars more accurate and holistic models of media effects on young media users.

The study of media effects began during World War I, in large part in response to concerns about propaganda spread by the military at home and abroad. Later, critics expressed similar concerns about what were perceived to be incredibly potent advertising and public relations efforts being employed by rapidly expanding corporations that were seen as ruthless and inhumane.

Initially, many social scientists, as well as the public, believed that mass media produced rather uniformly powerful effects on their unsuspecting audiences. This immense and presumably subversive power of media messages on vulnerable audiences was described in various and sundry colorful ways: Mass media supposedly fired messages like dangerous bullets, or injected messages like strong drugs propelled through hypodermic needles. These metaphors gave rise to the bullet or hypodermic needle theories of powerful media effects. Other scholars have labeled these early theoretical models the theory of uniform media influences.

The standard history of media effects research typically attributes the rise of these powerful effects theories to the development of a mass society of fragmented individuals who received similar messages from the mass media of communication. Several early media theorists focused on the dramatic changes taking place in society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the resulting effects on the masses. They noted the importance of mass behavior, which typically was attributed to the urbanization and industrialization of the early 20th century. Urbanization, in

turn, allegedly was due primarily to the social factors that detached people from their local cultures and local group settings.

Several early books on mass media were written with an underlying acceptance of the bullet or hypodermic needle theories; that is, they assumed an immense power of mass communication messages over their audiences. These included Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*, Harold Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, and George Bruntz's *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918*. The powerful-effects model also undergirded the creation of the influential Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937–1942), which was devoted to informing the public about propaganda, because of the fear that without critical education about propaganda, democracy could not withstand the onslaught of subversive mass media messages.

Lippmann, a journalist and philosopher, provided an extremely important impetus to communication research in *Public Opinion,* which is often viewed as a foundational element of the intellectual history of agenda-setting research. In this classic work, Lippmann called on his experiences with propaganda during World War I and emphasized the role of the news media in influencing audiences' perceptions about important issues in very powerful ways. Moreover, Lippmann's colorful prose (e.g., "the world outside and the pictures in our head") helped frame public opinion research for future generations of communication scholars.

The powerful-effects model is sometimes said to have served as the conceptual basis for a series of early empirical investigations sponsored by the Payne Fund in the 1920s, but in fact, the investigators typically considered factors such as age and cognitive abilities that could mitigate potentially powerful media effects. Although these investigators sought to determine the influence of the motion picture on children—and they typically found that movies could be powerful instruments of education, attitude change, emotional impact, health, and behavior change—such effects were in no way found to be uniform for all children and youth.

With a few notable exceptions, the powerful-effects model (or theory of uniform media influences) seems to have remained the dominant paradigm of media effects until after the Depression, when empirical studies began to indicate that effects from mass media were not as powerful as originally thought. Rather than a society of fragmented individuals who received all-powerful messages from mass media, the view shifted to one of a society of individuals who generally were not alienated, who interacted within groups, and who were active in selecting and discarding media messages. This active audience was perceived as limiting the effects of media messages and as having considerable potency of its own. Studies by Paul Lazarsfeld and associates at Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research, such as the voting studies reported in *The People's Choice* in 1948, revealed that individual opinion leaders often served as well-informed or expert interpreters of media messages for their peers, a process that sometimes mitigated media impact. Other social scientists, such as Carl Hovland, who was then working for the U.S. War Department, confirmed that mass media had only limited effects on individuals. Hovland conducted controlled experiments that assessed attitude change among soldiers who viewed training or motivational films. He found that many of the films had little or no effect on the soldiers' attitudes or motivations.

The limited-effects model became better established in 1960 with the publication of Joseph Klapper's *The Effects of Mass Communication*. This classic work reviewed hundreds of media effects studies from the 1920s through the 1950s and attempted to make blanket generalizations on the subject of mass media effects. Klapper called for a new, *phenomenistic* approach to research in the field, which emphasized particular factors that limited the effects of mass media messages on individuals. In his work, audience members were typically perceived as using media messages that reinforce existing opinions, abilities, and beliefs.

In the decades following the 1960s, mass media research thrived as the field of mass communication became firmly established at research universities throughout the United States and began to gain credibility worldwide. As new approaches to studying media effects emerged, especially in domains other than public opinion, voting, and marketing, many new theories and research findings did not fit neatly into the limited-effects paradigm; therefore, the media effects portfolio was expanded to include new studies that indicated moderate to powerful media effects under certain conditions.

Those theories asserting more robust media effects included Marshall McLuhan's sense extension theory, presented in *Understanding Media*, which alleged that media effects do not result from exposure to media content per se but from the essential form of a medium that is routinely and almost universally consumed. In

other words, medium effects are often cultural in scope. Such effects were thought to alter basic patterns of information processing, perception, and cognition among an entire population of users. Compelling empirical evidence to support or refute such claims about culturally universal media effects is largely lacking, but McLuhan's ideas captured the public's imagination and drew considerable attention to other types of media effects research.

The role of social constraints and audience interpretations (or media reception theory) began to receive widespread credence as mediating or mitigating factors in media effects. One critical change that often yielded more pronounced media effects was a shift toward examining dimensions of media effects other than their behavioral impact. In fact, studies assessing cognitive, affective, and physiological effects often made the point that changes in knowledge, attitude, and affect were important in their own right, even if they did not necessarily lead to immediate and overt changes in behaviors. Moreover, in the last two decades of the 20th century, many investigators began to focus on the *process* of effects, including precursors of effects (e.g., attention, comprehension, information acquisition) and reception processes perse (e.g., selective exposure, empathy).

In addition, more compelling support for robust media effects under certain conditions emerged, as research methodologies and statistical tools became more sophisticated, especially during the past quarter century. For example, an elaborate investigation by Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach, Milton Rokeach, and Joel W. Grube called the *Great American Values Test* revealed that the effects of viewing a 30-minute television program on values were robust when people were confronted with inconsistencies in their basic beliefs versus their behaviors.

The latter part of the 20th century saw the development of more powerful research tools (e.g., meta-analysis), advances in statistical modeling (e.g., structural equation modeling), and the emergence of new methodological approaches (e.g., epidemiological models). Moreover, the more widespread and sensitive usage of longitudinal designs and field experiments further clarified previous findings from media effects investigations and revealed that many of the most robust sorts of media effects accumulate over time and with continued media use (i.e., cumulative effects)

As a result of this burgeoning body of increasingly consensual evidence, a number of professional associations (e.g., the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, and Parent-Teachers Association) have issued public policy statements regarding the role of media consumption in the psychological well-being and public health of young people. The vast majority of these statements have implicitly or explicitly adopted moderate (and occasionally powerful) media effects models, including statements that under certain social and ecological conditions (e.g., family structure, parenting style, media use style), regular and prolonged exposure to certain types of media fare (e.g., violence, pornography, commercials for fast foods) contributes to mental or physical health problems (e.g., increased aggression or hostility, ADHD, obesity), especially among children and adolescents. Such moderate (and even powerful) media effects claims and models have become a mantra of postmodern information societies.

—Jennings Bryant

See also Media, Future of; Media Effects; Media Effects, Models of

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MEDIA EFFECTS, MALTREATED CHILDREN AND

Media research on maltreated children specifically focuses on television and defines maltreatment as physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse or neglect of children by their parents. Emotionally disturbed children also fit into this category; these children tend to be from unstable homes, often have behavioral problems in school, and are sometimes institutionalized. Maltreated children have become a source of interest in media research because they watch television more than other children. Media theories, such as social learning and cultivation theory, suggest that individuals who are heavy viewers of television are

more vulnerable to its effects. Typically, maltreated children watch television between 3.5 and 8 hours per day, compared to 3 hours for nonmaltreated children; institutionalized children typically watch the most television. In addition, a few studies have found that fewer rules are associated with television viewing in the homes of maltreated children. In the 1970s, William A. Donohue and Thomas R. Donohue started this line of research, and since then, Joyce Sprafkin and Kenneth D. Gadow have also conducted many investigations. This entry first discusses the negative effects revealed by this line of research and then examines a few positive outcomes that have also been identified.

A number of studies have examined the ability of maltreated children to recognize television images as fantasy rather than reality. Literature suggests that children, in general, are not able to distinguish between fantasy and reality until about the age of 8 years. This is an important ability because fright reactions, persuasion, the belief that the world is like television, and other outcomes can emerge from not being able to distinguish these differences. The results suggest that emotionally disturbed children are more likely than nondisturbed children to believe television content is real and that commercials are truthful. In general, this suggests that emotionally disturbed children can come to perceive the television world as the real world and be more likely to want, request, and buy advertised products. In one study, emotionally disturbed children received instruction on distinguishing between real and fantasy presentations on television and in commercials. In comparison to children who did not receive the instruction, those who did were more able to recognize the difference between fantasy and reality on television, but the instructions had no impact on perception of commercials.

Several investigations by Thomas R. Donohue have studied the effect of television on maltreated children's value judgments and choice of role models. Overall, maltreated children prefer violent to nonviolent programs and violent television characters to nonviolent ones. Another consistent finding is that when maltreated children are asked for their reaction to a fictitious situation, the behavior they predict for themselves is more aggressive than the behavior they predict for their friends, family, and favorite television characters. However, they usually do not describe their own behavior as antisocial in nature. In fact, maltreated children sometimes report television characters as acting more disruptive than they would behave in different situations. In most of these fictitious situation comparisons, the child's best friend is rated as the most similar to the subject and thus the most aggressive, followed by their favorite television character. Children usually predict that behavior of parents and other important adult figures in their lives would be significantly less aggressive than their own. Some of these investigations have also noted that emotionally disturbed children see television children and television parents as happier than their own families. One study found that abused children are less likely than nonabused children to be able to identify a favorite character, a favorite adult character, and favorite television families.

This inability to name a favorite character could be explained by a set of unpublished studies by Sarah F. Rosaen, which compared maltreated and nonmaltreated children in terms of their relationships to television characters. The results suggest that the attachment children have formed with their parents is an important predictor of the likelihood that they will feel close to television characters. The findings revealed that children who want a relationship with their parent but do not have one are the most likely to feel close to television characters, whereas children who avoid relationships with their parents because of parents' unreliability seldom form relationships with television characters. Because maltreated children experience both of these types of attachment to parents more than nonmaltreated children do, the Donohue results concerning the ability to identify television favorites may have occurred because that sample of abused children displayed avoidant attachment.

Another set of studies has focused on differences in reactions to aggressive content. This research has been of particular interest because maltreated children tend to be more aggressive behaviorally than nonmaltreated peers. Social learning theory has been extensively tested, and a consistent causal link has been noted between viewing violent content and aggressive behavior. Building on this research, Sprafkin and Gadow have conducted three studies on the relationship in maltreated populations. Two studies suggest that maltreated children have higher levels of aggression after viewing violent cartoons. One investigation found that older emotionally disturbed children (about 10 years old) showed more aggressive responses after viewing violent cartoons. In another study, researchers had emotionally disturbed and learning disabled children watch a violent or nonviolent cartoon and then asked

the children to decide whether to help or hurt another child. Children who viewed the aggressive cartoon pressed the "hurt" button for a longer time, with emotionally disturbed children pressing it longer than learning disabled children.

Finally, a few investigations have found positive outcomes from exposing emotionally disturbed and academically handicapped boys to television programs designed to promote better problem-solving skills. In general, the children exposed to the television programs exhibited slightly more socially acceptable behavior, slightly decreased social isolation, and small gains in emotional control and personality functioning in comparison to a group not exposed to the television program. Measures of teacher's perceptions in one study supported these findings.

—Sarah F. Rosaen

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Advertising, Effects on Children of; Aggression, Television and; Cartoons, Violence in; Cultivation Theory; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Fantasy–Reality Distinction; Fear Reactions; Parasocial Interaction; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory

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MEDIA EFFECTS, MODELS OF

Media effects, a central focus of the study of mass communication, are driven by two main concerns. First, mass communication is surrounded by a legacy of fear. Parents and educators are worried about the potential negative impact of the media, and such worries drive a good deal of research about children's use of movies, radio, television, and the Internet. A second reason for the study of media effects is the realization that mass communication can be an effective tool to promote educational outcomes and prosocial lifestyles. This awareness drives research on the educational, political, and health effects of media. Throughout history, thoughts about media effects have been framed by different models or ways of characterizing media effects. This entry presents two different ways to categorize approaches to the study of media effects: an historical approach that focuses on the degree of power of the mass media and an approach that focuses on the dimensions of different media effects.

HISTORICAL MODELS OF MEDIA EFFECTS

Models are simplified representations of some aspect of reality. Models of media effects focus on explanations of the impact of mass communication. Different models provide different explanations and emphases for how the mass media affect the audience. The history of the study of media effects is typically viewed as a series of models that differ in the relative power they ascribe, respectively, to the media and to the audience. Each phase of research presented a model that dominated thinking and research to explain how media effects occurred.

The first phase relied heavily on sociological and psychological paradigms of the early 20th century through the late 1930s. Early research on media effects was based on sociological views of the mass society that saw the audience as normless and socially isolated and on psychological research that focused on stimulus-response. According to the "magic bullet" or "hypodermic needle" models of media effects, mass media messages were seen as powerful stimuli that could directly and quickly evoke predictable responses from passive and socially isolated audience members. Harold Lasswell's 1927 research on the properties of propaganda falls squarely within this model, as does Robert Merton's research on the overwhelming audience response to American singer Kate Smith's appeals in a World War II war bond drive. This model, characterized as a direct effects model of media effects, viewed the audience as helpless to resist the well-crafted messages of powerful sources.

The second phase of media effects research emerged from evidence that media's power was often limited. Although news reports characterized the audience response to the radio broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* as widespread and profound, researchers

found that only a portion of the audience was really frightened by the fictional tale of invaders from outer space. Studies showed that a variety of audience characteristics either magnified or diminished the likelihood of fear. Other notable research programs provided other evidence that media effects were not as direct as originally thought. The Erie County (Ohio) voting study found that in a presidential election, personal contact could be more influential than media messages. World War II studies found that soldiers' resistance to filmed persuasion was limited by personal factors and experiences. Research of the era supported a limited-effects model of media effects. This model held that people were powerful and able to resist media messages. Instead of studying the effects of powerful sources, this model focused on the power of the audience. Important concepts in this model are selective exposure, selective attention, and selective recall. In general, people were seen as selecting media messages according to their own interests and attitudes. If they encountered messages contrary to their preexisting attitudes, selective perception and recall would limit the impact of those messages. According to the limited-effects model, reinforcement was the most common outcome of media effects. In 1960, Joseph Klapper summarized the limited-effects model as asserting that mass communication affects media consumers through interconnected mediating factors and influences rather than serving as a necessary and sufficient direct cause of specific effects.

This model dominated until the mid-1960s. With the arrival of television, it quickly became clear that the rapid adoption of this new medium overcame the power of selective exposure. Early studies, for example, showed that television viewers learned about political candidates from campaign ads, even if they were not particularly interested in the election. New theories of media effects emerged based on the impact of consistent messages carried across media channels. These theories, however, focus on cognitive and affective media effects (i.e., what people think and feel). Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, for example, found a strong agenda-setting media effect in the 1968 presidential election: Because the news media, for the most part, highlight the same issues, events, and people, the audience believes that these issues, events, and people are important. Thus, the media have the power to set the agenda for the audience. George Gerbner and Larry Gross found that the consistent patterns of television content—violence, overrepresentation of white males, and underrepresentation of women, racial-ethnic minorities, children, and older adults—affect audiences' perceptions about their world. Cultivation research holds that exposure to television content affects people's beliefs about society and instills fear. This model of powerful but limited effects focused on television's impact on social reality—how society is configured and what is important. Although these effects reflect powerful mass media, the effects are limited. The agenda-setting model, for example, holds that the media do not tell people what to think but rather what to think about. Cultivation theory holds not that television makes people act violently, but that it makes them think that society is violent. Effects are perceptual, not behavioral.

This historical view of media effects serves an organizing function for mass communication research. These models might very well reflect their historical eras. For example, the uncertainty of a society between two world wars might have given the media more power. There are, however, critics of this historical approach. The limited-effects phase, for example, was useful to the broadcast industry, which was resisting substantial government regulation at the time. Most important, research on the children's audience certainly did not follow this progression. Some of the earliest studies about the impact of movies on children (the Payne Fund studies) considered how many factors in children's lives (e.g., parental influence, family and social environment) intervened in the effects of movie content.

This historical view illustrates that different models of media effects place different emphasis on either the media or audience as the prime explanation for media effects. The study of media effects is now driven by a range of theories or specific explanations that assert direct connections between various aspects of media content and specific outcomes of media use. Now, scholars find it useful to organize their thinking about media effects along specific dimensions. Some of these dimensions delineate the type of effects; others elaborate the conditions of media impact.

DIMENSIONS OF MEDIA EFFECTS

Cognitive-Affective-Behavioral Effects

This dimension focuses on the types of effects: cognition (belief and knowledge acquisition), affect (attitudes and emotional responses), and behavior (action).

These distinctions are important because it is clear that media content can have separate effects along those separate dimensions. Cultivation research, for example, focuses on how exposure to violent images on television leads viewers to believe that the world is a violent place (a cognitive effect) and to become more fearful (an affective effect). Communication campaign research is built on the awareness that researchers need to direct audiences through stages of media effects, moving from attention, comprehension, and memory (cognitive effects) to decision and action (behavioral effects). This dimension reminds us that cognition and affect are important effects, but they do not always translate directly into behavior.

Micro- Versus Macrolevel Effects

This dimension is another that focuses on the type of media effect—that is, the level of media influence. Microlevel effects focus on the impact of the mass media on specific individual audience members. Research on microlevel effects examines what individual children learn from educational programming, which types of adolescents might be more likely to initiate smoking, or what kind of messages would be persuasive to different types of audiences. Microlevel research generally grows from a psychological perspective and focuses on short-term effects.

Macrolevel effects occur at the societal or cultural level. Some scholars argue that a focus on microlevel effects obscures macrolevel effects. Focusing on how media affects individuals can limit our observations of the larger changes occurring around us. For example, research on the effectiveness of *Sesame Street* showed that all children—regardless of socioeconomic background—learned from the program. This research concealed a macrolevel effect, however. *Sesame Street* was contributing to a growing gap in school preparedness because children from higher socioeconomic status (SES) families learned from the program at a faster rate than children of lower SES groups. Some scholars believe that media's strongest impacts are the most subtle, involving shifts in society and culture.

Intentional Versus Unintentional

Some effects are purposive and planned whereas others are accidental. Intentional media effects include learning from educational media, brand awareness as a result of commercial messages, adoption of healthy practices as a result of public service announcements, and changes in public opinion as a result of political campaign messages. Unintended media effects include aggressive behavior as a result of media violence, the adoption of unhealthy behaviors (e.g., underage drinking) as a consequence of advertisements, and political apathy as a result of negative political advertising.

Content Dependent Versus Content Irrelevant

Much research on media effects focuses on the impact of specific media content. That is, we are concerned about how the deluge of holiday toy commercials leads children to be materialistic. Or, we are concerned about how smoking in movies glamorizes and normalizes smoking. Or, we are concerned that children might model the aggressive behavior they see on television. Although there is a good deal of evidence that media content can cause effects, there is awareness that other media effects can be content irrelevant and grow out of media use.

The most commonly researched content-irrelevant effect is displacement. Parents and educators have been concerned about entertainment media's displacement of educational media. A body of research has examined how children's television use is linked to lower levels of academic achievement. This research is based on the assumption that television use (or, today, computer games and Internet use) displaces reading and schoolwork. Other displacement effects focus on how entertainment media use keeps people from becoming politically involved. In 1948, Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton proposed that the media led to a "narcotizing dysfunction," in which political action is displaced by public affairs media use.

In another area of content-irrelevant media effects research, scholars speculate on how the forms of different media lead to different learning styles. Many writers have argued that television's pacing and commercial interruptions lead to shortened attention spans.

Short-Term Versus Long-Term

It is important to understand whether different media effects are enduring. Not all effects are long term. Some theories of media effects argue that media content teaches children unrealistic and stereotypical views society, but research does not always specify how long these effects persist. Is it possible that exposure to

different media messages—or real-world experiences—can alter unrealistic perceptions? Understanding the persistence of media effects suggests how to mitigate negative effects and how to enhance positive effects.

Reinforcement Versus Change

The most visible media effects studies highlight how the mass media change the audience—for example, how violent media content makes children more aggressive. Or how political advertising leads people to change their voting intentions. Or, how alcohol advertising leads adolescents to drink. These are certainly important aspects of the study of the mass media, but there is evidence that media's strongest impact is reinforcement and stabilization. Because it is easier to observe change than reinforcement, we often forget the media's power to stabilize—to keep people from changing. The power of the mass media to reinforce might be stronger than their power to change. Violent media content, for example, might have a greater impact on some youngsters because it provides justification for their aggressive tendencies. In a media environment where audiences are exposed to countless persuasive messages, media advocates need to create messages that keep people committed to prosocial behavior.

—Elizabeth M. Perse

See also Desensitization Effects; Displacement Effect; Uses and Gratifications Theory; Violence, Effects of

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MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT

The media are an integral part of children's and adolescents' everyday life. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, on a randomly selected day, U.S. children from 8 to 18 years old use media for more than 6 hours a day, and they primarily prefer entertainment media. Children's experience of media entertainment is an everyday phenomenon that is complex and that differs from the adult experience in many ways. Research has addressed a number of these differences, although the focus has been primarily on television use.

Entertainment is becoming increasingly important in everyday life, as the growing proportion of entertainment among all media offerings demonstrates. Some researchers already refer to "the age of entertainment" instead the information age. One possible explanation for the growing popularity of entertainment media is the decrease in the number of hours worked and the corresponding increase in leisure time. On the other hand, the economic situation has improved in industrialized countries, and more people can afford media hardware such as cellular phones.

Entertainment experiences depend on different factors: the supporting medium, the special format of the product, and its preparation, as well as subject-centered (expectancies, attitudes, knowledge, desires, moods, etc.) and situational aspects. Although entertainment is a mostly positive experience, one can undergo very different cognitive and emotional states during entertainment reception (e.g., suspense, sadness, frustration, or self-reflection).

ENTERTAINMENT PREFERENCES

Even very young children have a clear idea about what media content they want to experience. Movies with a mixture of humor, action, suspense, and romance are most appealing. But the content also has to be original, comprehensible, and interesting, and it has to offer a relationship to the media character. Age, sex, and socioeconomic status are moderating variables for these preferences. Whereas girls seem to prefer media content in which no one is hurt, boys like to see violence on the screen. Researchers find large differences between girls and boys, particularly in the choice of media role models. Preschool boys are interested in masculine heroic actors, such as sport stars, soldiers, and cops; girls like feminine figures such as fairies, princesses, or ballerinas, but they also accept male role models. Perhaps male actors normally have more attractive roles than women do and are therefore much more interesting as role models. When children grow up, these entertainment preferences become more characteristic. One reason might be the stronger affiliation to peers who exert pressure on children and adolescents to behave according to their gender.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ENTERTAINMENT RECEPTION

Children's prerequisites for entertainment experiences are quite different from those of adults, as children are undergoing significant mental and physical changes and continuously experience volatile emotional and cognitive reactions, interests, and preferences. An important developmental feature concerning children's media usage is their capacity for information processing. Young children often have comprehension problems when using media, mostly because they are unable to distinguish between primary and secondary messages. As a consequence, they may consider secondary action more important than the central information of a narrative. Furthermore, children may perceive several connected scenes as independent of each other, complicating their understanding of the plot. Also, children's attention to media differs from the attention of adults: Children watching TV might display attentional inertia—the longer they face the screen, the longer they continue to face it. And vice versa: The longer spectators direct their attention to something other than the screen, the more difficult it will be to call their attention back to it. This phenomenon affects children's entertainment experience.

Another characteristic concerns the distinction between real and fictional media content. Very young children think that all media content is real. When children get older, however, they distinguish between reality and fiction, with the help of perceptual clues; for example, they understand that cartoons are not real. Later, they may know that Big Bird from *Sesame Street* is a person in a costume but believe the Cosby family really exists. Children's perception of media characters also differs from that of adults. Young children attach more importance to the appearance of characters than to their behavior. Children might evaluate an attractive person as good and an unattractive person as a bad character. Although children demonstrate an early ability to take the perspective of other people, a complex empathy with the actors on the screen is not yet fully developed in infants and young children. Finally, adults and children have different emotional experiences while using entertainment media. Research examining emotional reactions toward scary films has shown that young children are more afraid of concrete visual threats, whereas older children are more scared of humans with negative motives.

PROSPECTS

Although media psychology and communication researchers have been working in this area for years, some deficits remain: All too often studies focus exclusively on television and neglect the young users of other entertainment media. Future research has to fill this gap, as the usage of entertainment media starts earlier in life.

—Peter Vorderer and Leila Katharina Steinhilper

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Gender, Media Use and; Media Genre Preferences; School-Age Children, Impact of the Media on

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MEDIA EXPOSURE

A recent study published by the Kaiser Family Foundation reported that American youth between the ages of 8 and 18 spend about 6½ hours with media daily, nearly 4 hours of which is television use. Is this too much exposure? Thousands of studies have established that excessive media use, particularly when filled with depictions of sex, violence, and other deviant behaviors can skew certain youth's worldviews and increase the likelihood of risky behaviors. Certainly, other factors such as parenting, environment, and biology greatly influence children's attitudes and behaviors. Yet, in our highly mediated world, the media's presentation of social reality almost certainly impacts youth's perceptions of society and acceptable behavior. Therefore, a conscious reduction of the amount of media exposure, ideally combined with parental mediation and discussion, would likely prove beneficial to youth of all ages. This entry examines two sources of concern among parents and educators regarding youth and media exposure: violence and sex. Efforts to curb excessive media consumption are then discussed.

YOUTH VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION: LINKS TO MEDIA EXPOSURE

More than 1,000 scientific studies of various populations over three decades conclude that viewing violence on television increases the probability that viewers will be more fearful, will become more desensitized to real-world violence, or will become violent themselves. Longitudinal, cross-cultural studies have shown that children who watched more violence on television were more likely than those who watched less television violence to be aggressive as teenagers and young adults, even after controlling for various demographic factors. Violent or deviant behavior has also been linked with certain musical preferences, such as rap and heavy metal. It has been estimated that up to 15% of violent behavior in the United States can be attributed to television viewing.

SEX AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES: THE ROLE OF MEDIA

The pervasiveness of sexual content in today's media is undeniable, with American media being considered the most sexually suggestive and irresponsible. In addition to television shows, particular emphasis has also been placed on the sexual content of music videos.

About 36 studies published since the early 1980s have examined links between media exposure and the sexual attitudes, assumptions, and behaviors of youth, with the overall trend indicating that media exposure is in fact linked to sexual outcomes. The degree of association between media and sexual attitudes or behavior in these studies varied depending on certain demographic factors and the type of media examined. These findings yielded conditional yet consistent evidence that media exposure of youth relates to their sexual attitudes, behaviors, and expectancies toward sex.

Research demonstrates that youth learn about sexuality from the media. Television creates the sense that sex is normal for teenagers, and teenagers have reported normalized media depictions of teen sex as a reason for engaging in sexual activity. Youth have named media as a source of information about sex, sexuality, how to act, and the perceived prevalence of contraceptive use. According to studies by the Kaiser Family Foundation, although teenagers name parents and teachers as important purveyors of sexual information, between 40% and 60% of teens reported learning about pregnancy, birth control, sexuality, sexual health, or how to address sexual issues from television, movies, music, or magazines. We are left to question what sorts of information teens hone from media, considering that the teen pregnancy rate in the United States is the highest among developed countries worldwide.

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE

One experiment, using a randomized controlled trial, assessed the effectiveness of an 18-lesson curriculum designed to reduce television, videotape, and video game use among third and fourth graders in San Jose, California. After a 10-day "TV turnoff" portion of the curriculum, the participants agreed to a media budget

of 7 hours per week, and they handed in weekly parent signature slips to affirm compliance to the budget.

Using pre- and posttest peer ratings of aggression, children's aggression ratings for the experimental groups increased significantly less over the course of the school year than ratings of children in the control groups. Observed incidents of verbal and physical aggression were reduced 47% and 37%, respectively, for those children in the experimental group. Because of a small sample size, however, only the verbal aggression finding was statistically significant. There were no significant results to indicate that children in the experimental group felt the world was any less "mean and scary" than control group children did. Finally, children in the experimental group exhibited significantly less consumer behavior, as measured by the number of purchase requests directed toward their parents, than children in the control group.

Music videos have also received much attention in their potential to shape youth attitudes and behavior. One study showed a significant reduction in weekly violent incidents in a forensic hospital over a 55-week period, from 44 incidents per week to 27 incidents per week, after removing MTV (Music Television) from the available television channels, results that were further supported by time series analysis. While the experiment was performed with a specific population, it is unique in that it was able to actually measure effects directly attributable to decreased music video exposure. Longitudinal experiments such as this are normally difficult to conduct in the field with teenagers, many of whom attend to music videos on a regular basis at home or in the homes of their peers.

A CALL FOR ACTION: TURN OFF THE TV

In April of each year, Kaiser Permanente and the TV Turnoff Network sponsor TV-Turnoff Week, which encourages parents and children to discontinue use of their televisions for a full week and instead pursue other activities such as exercise, arts, crafts, and other endeavors. In 2004, an estimated 7.6 million people participated in TV-Turnoff Week. Other organizations calling for less media exposure and more media reform include Adbusters, KidsHealth for Parents, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

—Michelle Arganbright

See also Computer Use, Rates of; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of; Media Effects; Sexual Content, Age and Comprehension of; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Experimental Studies of; Violence, Natural Experiments and

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Adbusters: www.adbusters.org

American Academy of Pediatrics: http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/mediause.cfm.

KidsHealth for Parents: kidshealth.org

TV Turnoff Network: www.tvturnoff.org

MEDIA GENRE PREFERENCES

The study of media genre preferences pertains to individuals' selections of certain types of content within each medium (e.g., horror or documentary films, news or talk shows, rap or rock music, etc.). Media effects researchers attempt to determine how and why individuals choose certain types of media content. Individuals vary greatly in their selections and preferences of media genres. For example, some children are drawn to cartoons and others to sitcoms. Adolescents use their musical selections, whether rock, country, rap, or other, to differentiate themselves from others. The process of developing preferences for a particular genre is complex. Needs and motivations, individual differences, and moods are just some of the many factors that affect individuals' disposition toward various genres.

MOTIVATIONS

According to the uses and gratifications theory, individuals actively select media to fulfill specific needs and desires. Arnett specified five uses of media by adolescents, including entertainment, identity formation, high sensation, coping, and youth culture identification. Like adults, children and adolescents use the media for enjoyment; they get pleasure from watching a particular type of show or listening to a piece of music. Of course, what is enjoyable for one person is not necessarily enjoyable for another, so even when individuals have a common reason for using media, their selections may vary.

Adolescents also use the media to shape their ideas of who they are and where they fit in regard to others. A preference for a particular type of music, such as punk rock, may indicate an adolescent's identification with others who likewise enjoy this type of music. This choice of music may also reveal an adolescent's appreciation for a certain type of lifestyle, fashion, hairstyle, worldview, behavior, and so forth, that are associated with this genre.

Researchers have identified many motivations for using media in general and television in particular. Rubin identified six television viewing motivations of children and adolescents, including to learn, to pass time (or habit), for companionship, to escape or forget, for arousal, and for relaxation. He found that most children and adolescents watch television out of habit or when they have nothing better to do. Moreover, children and adolescents who used television for different purposes often selected dissimilar programs. For example, those who watched television because it was arousing, thrilling, or exciting preferred adventure or dramatic programs, whereas those who watched out of habit, to escape, or for companionship preferred situation comedies. Furthermore, those who watched out of habit were most likely to shun news or public affairs programming. Differences in individual goals thus influence genre choice.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

The strengths of certain needs also affect media selection. For example, some individuals have a strong need for cognition or desire to think and understand whereas others do not. The strength of this need may determine not only the decision to use a particular medium, but also the type of programming that is selected. It is plausible that those who have a higher need for cognition would choose programming that is educational or informative. In support of this idea, Hawkins et al. found that individuals with a high need for cognition were less likely to pay attention to dramas and comedy shows than were those with a low need for cognition, but this difference was not found for news or informational programs.

Another trait that affects genre preferences is level of sensation seeking. High sensation seekers generally prefer novel and intense stimuli and often take more risks than do low sensation seekers. This difference may be due to divergent levels of arousal for high and low sensation seekers, such that high sensation seekers are less aroused by the same content or activities than are low sensation seekers. As a result, high sensation seekers prefer programming that elicits higher levels of arousal. Potts, Dedmon, and Halford found that high sensation seekers viewed more music videos, daytime talk shows, stand-up comedy programs, documentaries, and animated cartoons but fewer newscasts and drama programs than did low sensation seekers.

AGE, GENDER, AND ETHNICITY

The level of sensation seeking varies by age and gender. Arnett found that adolescents rate higher in sensation seeking than do adults and that males rate higher than females. This may explain why action-adventure films are most liked by adolescent males. Other genres

associated with high sensation seeking include heavy metal and rap music, horror films, and violent programming, all of which are more commonly favored by males rather than females. Differences in media genre preferences for males and females may also be explained by gender role socialization. For example, boys may enjoy violent content because they learn that aggressive behavior is masculine. Gender role socialization may also explain why females favor romantic films (e.g., chick flicks) and musicals, whereas males tend to avoid these types of films.

Another variable that has been found to influence genre selections is ethnicity and race. Although during adolescence some feel the need to separate themselves from their ethnic or racial heritage, many embrace genres such as rap or country music, which is associated with their ethnic-racial background. In terms of television programs and films, viewers often select content that features characters of their race or ethnicity because they may be better able to relate to or identify with these characters.

Age also affects the types of media that children and adolescents favor. As children and adolescents develop and change, their preferences for certain media genres may change as well. For example, young children watch many cartoons, but as they get older, their interests shift to other types of programs, such as dramas and situation comedies. The same progression can be seen for other media, such as radio and film. Children often prefer Top 40 radio formats; however, teenagers often find a specific musical genre and pick radio stations accordingly. Although many factors, such as changing needs, may contribute to these types of shifts in favored genres, parental controls and media targeting also play a role.

ATTITUDES, DISPOSITIONS, AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

Personality, dispositional, and attitudinal differences also contribute to media selection. According to selective exposure theories, individuals choose media content that is consistent with their preexisting attitudes. Individuals who are racist, for example, may select content that confirms their supremacy over other races rather than content that refutes this belief. Selective exposure theories are supported by the findings of Rubin, West, and Mitchell, which reveal that fans of heavy metal and rap music have higher levels of aggressiveness and more negative attitudes toward women than do fans of other musical genres. It is possible that the lyric content of many heavy metal and rap songs attracts adolescents who hold negative images of women or who are predisposed to aggressive behavior. Rap lyrics, which often focus on societal discontent, also attract adolescents who are generally more distrustful of others. However, it is not clear whether previously held attitudes always determine preferences for particular media genres, as selective exposure theories suggest, or whether the consumption of media content causes certain attitudes and behaviors.

Other variables that have, at times, been found to influence children's and adolescent's preferences for media genres include educational achievement, school commitment, acceptance of authority, and parental preferences. Roe found that school commitment and achievement were related to music and video choices. Specifically, adolescents who preferred harder types of rock music, such as heavy metal, lacked a commitment to school. Also, males who preferred violent videos had negative attitudes about school. One possible explanation for these findings is that those who perform poorly in school or who dislike it may desire to rebel against the mainstream and thus choose oppositional media such as heavy metal music and violent videos.

Traits such as being neurotic, psychotic, and extroverted also influence music and film preferences. Weaver found that people who were neurotic (i.e., emotional, socially isolated, and anxious) favored news and informational programming and dramas but avoided comedy and adventure programs; people who were psychotic (i.e., impulsive and nonconforming) liked more violent programming, dramas, and tragedies.

MOODS

According to mood management theories, moods influence people's preferences for certain media. The theory is based on the assumption that people seek to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. A person who is in a negative mood will want to change this mood and will select programming accordingly. Similarly, people who are bored seek exciting programming whereas those who are overly anxious choose relaxing content. Genre preferences may thus shift based on mood. Weaver and Laird found that women's genre preferences changed throughout their menstrual cycles because of changes in their affective states. When experiencing negative moods, women showed a preference for comedy shows; in positive moods, they

favored drama or suspense programs. However, they were unaware of why their preferences had shifted.

Adolescents often report being attracted to media content that is congruent with their moods. For example, Gibson, Aust, and Zillmann found that adolescents reported that if they had recently been scorned by a love interest, they would choose to listen to love-lamenting songs, whereas if they had recently encountered a satisfying love situation, they would prefer love-celebrating songs. Therefore, it is possible that adolescents sometimes choose to listen to sad songs because these types of songs help them cope with depressing situations. Other genres of music may be chosen for similar reasons. Arnett found that adolescent males reported listening to heavy metal music most often when they were angry. Even though this type of music is characteristically bleak and is often criticized for promoting negative feelings and behavior, it can have a purgative effect. Some adolescents choose to listen to this type of music to release negative emotions and to improve their moods.

Media genre preferences—whether consciously or unconsciously determined, as suggested by the uses and gratifications theory and mood management theories, respectively—determine what media content people consume. Although many studies have examined the factors that affect these preferences, more research is needed to determine how these factors interact with each other.

—K. Maja Krakowiak

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; African Americans, Media Use by; Depression, Media Use and; Gender, Media Use and; Latina/os, Media Use by; Mood Management Theory; Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Music Listening, Uses of; Native Americans, Media Use by; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of; Radio, Listeners' Age and Use of; Selective Exposure; Sensation Seeking; Television, Motivations for Viewing of; Uses and Gratifications Theory

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MEDIA JOURNALS

Much of the research on children, adolescents, and the media is published in academic journals. Indeed, some have argued that research is not really knowledge until it has been published so that it can be shared with other scientists and practitioners.

Several distinctions are important for understanding journals. First, some journals are refereed, and other journals are not (the latter are often called vanity journals). When someone submits a potential article to a refereed journal, the editor asks a set of scholars (usually three or four) who are experts on the topic to review the manuscript. These experts critique the manuscript and make recommendations to the editor: to accept the manuscript for publication, to ask the author(s) to revise the manuscript (and make suggestions on how to improve the manuscript), or not to publish the manuscript. Ultimately, the editor makes the decision on whether to

publish a manuscript or not, but the reviewers greatly aid in this process. For vanity or nonrefereed journals, either the editor asks authors to submit a manuscript, or the authors submit the manuscript and pay the journal to publish it. In either case, manuscripts are not sent to experts to review in nonrefereed journals. Refereed journals are generally considered better because having experts review the manuscript before publication generally improves the quality of the published manuscript.

A second distinction among journals is whether they are associated with some organization, such as the International Communication Association (ICA) or they are independent. Whether the journal is associated with a professional organization or not generally does not influence the quality of what is published in the journal, but generally, independent journals have more freedom because the organization that controls a journal *may* place limits on the types of articles the editor can accept for publication. Of course, independent journals also have limitations placed on them because the publisher wants to make a profit. There are three major academic organizations in the United States that study children, adolescents, and the media: the ICA, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), and the National Communication Association (NCA).

The ICA publishes several journals, two of which include some research on children, adolescents, and the media. *Human Communication Research* tends to publish empirical research, some of which deals with children and the media. The *Journal of Communication* publishes a wider variety of articles, including a range of topics and research methodologies.

AEJMC also publishes a variety of journals, two of which include research on children, adolescents, and the media: The *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* and *Mass Communication and Society*. The *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* tends to publish empirical research (like HCR). *Mass Communication and Society* publishes articles from a number of different perspectives that deal with the media and larger social issues, many of which deal with children and adolescents.

The NCA also publishes a number of journals, including *Communication Monographs* and *Critical Studies in Mass Communication. However, despite a large* membership in the NCA's Mass Communication Division, the NCA journals do not publish a lot of research dealing with children, adolescents, and the media.

Independent journals that publish research on adolescents, children, and the media include *Communication Research* and *Media Psychology.* As the title suggests, all of the research published in *Media Psychology* focuses on psychological approaches to understanding the media. *Media Psychology* publishes both empirical research and theoretical essays dealing with the media. *Communication Research* tends to publish empirical research on a number of topics related to communication including media, children, and adolescence.

These are the main media journals that publish research on children, adolescents, and the media. However, many other journals occasionally publish research on this topic; in psychology, for example, *Journal of Adolescence* (including a special issue on video games in 2004), *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* (including a special issue on children's educational TV in 2003), *Child Development*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. In addition, there are many other specialized journals that publish research relevant to their topic area. For example, the journal *Aggressive Behavior* has published research on the effects of TV violence and video games. Likewise, *Addiction* and *Lancet*–both medical journals–have published research on health-related topics and children's television.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also Research Methods, Experimental Studies; Research Methods, Qualitative.

MEDIA LITERACY, AIMS AND PURPOSES OF

Media literacy refers to an expansion of alphabetic literacy and orality concepts to include the social uses of print, electronic, and digital media tools and records. The Aspen Institute Leadership Forum on Media Education defines media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of forms." These forms include print, still images, moving images, interactive media, digital media, and audio.

In North America, the term *media literacy* was advanced in the 1980s by the Association for Media Literacy in Canada and institutionalized as a curriculum requirement in the province of Ontario. The Ontario Ministry of Education (1989) defines media literacy as

Having computers with Internet access is a key element in building media literacy among students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the ratio of students to computers with Internet access in U.S. public schools was 4.8 to 1 in 2002, compared to 12.1 to 1 in 1998, when it was first measured. The percentage of U.S. public schools with Internet access grew from 80% in 2000 to 99% in 2002. Efforts to implement media literacy programs in U.S. schools began in the 1970s, and today media literacy skills are directly or indirectly referenced in the learning standards for all 50 states, including standards for English and language arts, social studies, science, math, technology, art, and health. Advocates ranging from pediatricians to politicians support the work of elementary and secondary teachers in developing media literacy among children and adolescents.

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> concerned with helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media, the techniques used by them, and the impact of these techniques. More specifically, it is education that aims to increase students' understanding and enjoyment of how media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organized, and how they construct reality. Media literacy also aims to provide students with the ability to create media products. (pp. 6–7)

The term *media literacy* is also one of a constellation of multiliteracies and, as such, is often used interchangeably with other literacy qualifiers such as information literacy, digital literacy, visual literacy, and 21st-century literacy, all seeking to convey a contemporary and expanded concept of literacy.

Media literacy is proposed as an outcome of the process of media education whereby practitioners teach *about* media as well as *through* the uses of a variety of media forms and content. Media education is characterized by two distinct and overlapping domains of media analysis and production, roughly analogous to the study of reading and writing in alphabetic literacy. Because of the complexity of literacy theory and practice, the term *media education* is often favored over *media literacy* by international media educators.

Media education encompasses the critical analysis and hands-on production of a wide range of texts and tools across diverse genres, including literacy artifacts found in popular culture, primary and secondary source materials, mass media, educational media, advertising, as well as blogs, podcasts, vodcasts, wikis, and the social uses of consumer media tools and discourses, such as text messaging. Practitioners also analyze media content within economic, historical, social, and cultural contexts, including the role of media institutions in society and the way that media aesthetics contribute to meaning. Media analysis activities are reinforced by hands-on, experiential production of print, electronic, and digital media in a variety of forms.

The aims and purposes of media literacy are diverse, reflecting dichotomies in the emerging field, akin to historical debates about the purposes and outcomes of alphabetic literacy for individuals, institutions, and societies. Practitioners hope to instill critical literacy skills, as well as media production skills that individuals can use to strategically communicate in a wide range of social contexts. Media literacy competency includes knowledge and skill indicators related to media construction, design of media content, narrative structures, commercialism, consumerism, political and social implications of media, the relationship between media form and content, the nature of media industries, media ethics, characteristics of media genre, representation and stereotyping, distribution strategies, media audiences, social uses of media content, and immersion in virtual environments. In short, media literate individuals are seen as active, as opposed to passive users of media.

Differences in the articulation of media literacy outcomes are rooted in the degree to which practitioners adhere to aims and purposes derived from at least two media education models. These models differ in that the first focuses on negative outcomes of media use whereas the second emphasizes its creative potential.

In the United States, awareness of the need for media literacy advanced as a by-product of media effects studies and the creation of television critical-viewing materials for children in the 1970s. From the perspective of the first model, media literacy is viewed as a prophylactic for presumed negative media effects, especially with young children. Sometimes referred to as a *protectionist* or *inoculation model* of media education, these approaches to media education seek to inhibit access to media content and tools thought to be harmful, particularly to children. Protectionist models for media literacy education promote strategies for critical viewing and parental control of media with children.

In contrast, *open-access models* of media education recognize personal pleasure in media use and promote self-expression in media production by individuals and groups in the belief that audiences, including children, purposefully negotiate meaning and are aware that media are constructed. Open-access models aim to advance media literacy education from strong freedom of expression foundations, stressing widespread media access as a cornerstone of democratic societies. This model favors relatively unrestricted access to tools, content, and distribution, with implications for related legal and policy issues such as copyright, media rating systems, media ownership, and community media standards.

Media education is integrated across both formal and informal learning environments, although data about the practitioners, approaches, and best practices in the field is still largely anecdotal and emerging. Media educators tend to emphasize the role of media analysis and production as literacy tools for learning, youth development, social justice, civic activism, artistic expression, and community building.

Formal media education programs are integrated across a range of disciplines, including language arts, the arts, math and science, and health, and indicators for media analysis and practice can be found explicitly in state and national standards documents across the United States, as well as internationally. For example, the state of Texas explicitly includes "viewing/representing" standards in the English, language arts, and reading strand of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards, which are intended for media education across grade levels. Other states also include standards language that encourages media analysis in the classroom across the disciplines. These standards serve as a rationale for increased teacher preparation in the integration, analysis, and production of new media across the curriculum in formal classroom settings.

Although hands-on media production can be found in public and private elementary and secondary schools across the United States, the term *youth media* is most often associated with production programs conducted in informal learning spaces by nonprofit or community-based organizations. Internationally, media production programs in both formal and informal educational settings are also referred to as *media studies.*

Youth media efforts place an emphasis on media production and grew out of technology access programs that were created to support a broader, more equitable and more diverse public access to information communication technologies and resources for all citizens. Youth media programs have overlapping missions related to the uses of the media arts for media appreciation, social activism, vocational readiness, academic preparation, and general youth development issues, such as preventative health practices and youth self-efficacy.

—Kathleen Tyner

See also Digital Literacy; Media Education (various entries)

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MEDIA LITERACY, APPROACHES TO

Media literacy is most commonly defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of forms. In the United States, the

concept of media literacy largely began with an emphasis on TV literacy; parents and educators were urged to protect children from misleading commercial messages and other harmful effects of television through discussion and analysis of what they saw on television. Since the early 1990s, media literacy theory and application have broadened considerably, going beyond this early emphasis on protectionism to focus on inquiry, empowerment, and education. Today, media literacy is considered to be a logical extension of traditional literacy applied to a wide range of media formats, including those that are print based (e.g., newspapers, magazines, books), audiovisual (e.g., radio, television, film, recorded music, video games), and digital (e.g., computer games, the Internet, podcasting).

The essence of media literacy involves critical thinking and communication skills that are developed through increased awareness of how media messages are constructed, practice in deconstructing or decoding those messages, understanding the economics and power structure of media industries, and training in digital technologies and media production. Specific media literacy skills include learning how to use media wisely and effectively, both in and outside of the classroom; knowing the basic language used in each media form; being able to judge the credibility and accuracy of information presented in different formats; evaluating the author's intent and meaning; appreciating the techniques used to persuade and convey emotion; being able to recognize bias and stereotypes in media messages; and being able to communicate effectively through different mediated formats.

MEDIA LITERACY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Media literacy, then, overlaps with many other types of literacy that are central to K–12 and higher education, including information literacy, digital literacy, scientific literacy, visual literacy, and cultural literacy, and it has been identified as an essential skill for children and adolescents in the 21st century. In educational settings, media literacy training builds critical thinking, communication, and technology skills and has been shown to be an effective way for teachers to address different learning styles and show an appreciation for multiple perspectives. In the United States, media literacy skills are now directly or indirectly referenced in the learning standards for all 50 states, including those for English/language arts, social studies, science, math, technology, art, and health. In social studies, the growing emphasis on document-based questions has led to wide acceptance of media literacy education as an effective pedagogical approach, especially for at-risk students and visual learners. Media literacy is also frequently used in the public health arena to address issues such as alcohol and tobacco use, nutrition, body image and eating disorders, and violence.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

Five key concepts are widely recognized as fundamental to media literacy, whether applied to film, news, advertising, photographs, or textbooks: (1) All media messages are constructed; (2) each medium has different characteristics, strengths, and a unique language of construction; (3) audiences negotiate meaning, thus different people may interpret the same media message in different ways; (4) media messages are produced for particular purposes, including profit, persuasion, education, and artistic expression; and (5) media messages have embedded values and points of view.

Although there are many different approaches to the application of media literacy, most involve asking a key set of questions about any media message, such as Who produced it and who sponsored it, and what is their purpose? Who is the target audience, and how is the message specifically tailored to its members? What techniques are used to inform, persuade, entertain, and attract attention? How current, accurate, and credible is the information in this message, and how can we tell? Whose perspectives are included, and whose voices or perspectives are left out? What else is left out of this message that might be important to know?

MEDIA LITERACY, PARENTING, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Media literacy for parents and early childhood educators often focuses on setting limits for the amount and type of media used (especially with respect to television, video games, and computers), with initiatives like "Turn Off the TV Week" that are aimed at decreasing children's reliance on television as their major leisure activity. Recommendations for parents also include coviewing television with their children, discussing not only the commercial messages but also the stereotyped portrayals, assumptions about the appropriateness of violence, and other value messages. In early

childhood education, media literacy typically includes teaching children to distinguish between program and commercial content, to identify tricks that advertisers use to make toys and foods appear better than they actually may be, and to be aware of misleading nutritional information presented in TV commercials for cereals, snacks, and heavily sugared beverages.

MEDIA PRODUCTION

Besides developing critical viewing and analysis skills, media literacy also involves teaching children and adolescents the technology and media production skills necessary to communicate effectively in today's world. Media production programs for youth have grown dramatically as video and digital technologies have become more affordable and accessible, and they have been especially effective in urban communities as a way of reaching disenfranchised teens. Often funded through afterschool programs or community organizations, youth-based media productions now include news, documentaries, video poems, public service advertisements, and social action pieces.

MEDIA LITERACY RESOURCES AND RESEARCH

Information about applications of media literacy in different educational contexts is available through a huge number of published materials and online resources (see Table 1). Because the field of media literacy is quite new in the United States, there is still little empirical evidence documenting how well media literacy works, especially in educational contexts. Published research on the effectiveness of media literacy is scattered across a range of fields, including communications, education, and public health. Some studies have shown media literacy training to be effective in helping children and adolescents become more critical viewers of media, more skeptical about advertising and the

Table 1 Media Literacy Organizations and Web Resources

Action Coalition for Media Education http://www.acmecoalition.org
Grassroots organization promoting media literacy, independent media-making, and media reform.

Alliance for a Media Literate America http://www.amlainfo.org
National grassroots membership organization; sponsors biennial National Media Education Conference.

Center for Media Literacy http://www.medialit.org
Professional development; main source for purchase of media literacy resource materials in the United States

Just Think Foundation http://www.justthink.org
Works directly with youth and educators to build critical thinking skills and creative media production.

Media Awareness Network http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm
Canadian web resource for media and information literacy with special sections for teachers and parents.

Media Education Foundation http://www.mediaed.org
Produces and distributes video documentaries on a range of media issues to increase citizen participation.

Media Literacy Clearinghouse http://medialit.med.sc.edu/
Award-winning website designed for K–12 educators with hundreds of links to curriculum resources.

Media Literacy Online Project http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/home/index.html
Online archive of articles, bibliographies, and other resources regarding media, children, and adolescents.

November Learning/Building Learning Communities http://www.anovember.com
Well-respected source for effective use of information/communication technologies to enhance learning.

Project Look Sharp http://www.projectlooksharp.org
Professional development; produces curriculum-driven media literacy materials for K–12 and college use.

Internet, and more resistant to persuasive messages and portrayals about unhealthy behaviors. Initial studies of media literacy integrated into classroom instruction and practice have found that it engages students and may strengthen critical thinking and listening skills, improve reading comprehension and analysis, and develop both writing and general communication skills.

—*Cyndy Scheibe*

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Adult Mediation Strategies; Cognitive Development, Media and; Digital Literacy; Media Education, Family Involvement in; Media Education, International; Media Education, Schools and; Media Education Foundation; Media Literacy Programs; TV-Turnoff Week

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MEDIA LITERACY, KEY CONCEPTS IN

Media literacy is often understood as the process of critically analyzing media messages, but it includes the ability to compose messages using media tools and technologies as well. In recent years, media literacy has been defined as an extended conceptualization of literacy, a view many educators embrace; in this perspective, media literacy includes the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms. This definition arose in the early 1990s as media literacy educators from across the United States gathered at the Aspen Institute for a leadership conference on media literacy. The term *access* generally means the ability to locate information or find messages and to be able to comprehend and interpret a message's meaning. *Analysis* refers to the process of recognizing and examining the author's purpose, target audience, construction techniques, symbol systems, and technologies used to construct the message. The concept of analysis also includes the ability to appreciate the political, economic, social, and historical context in which media messages are produced and circulated as part of a cultural system. *Evaluation* refers to the process of assessing the veracity, authenticity, creativity, or other qualities of a media message, making judgments about a message's worth or value. Finally, the definition of media literacy includes the ability to *communicate* messages in a wide variety of forms (using language, photography, video, online media, etc.). Media literacy emphasizes the ability to use production processes to compose and create messages using various symbol systems and technology tools.

Media literacy is primarily conceptualized as a learning outcome within an educational framework that aims to give children and young people opportunities to learn about mass media, popular culture, and communication technologies. *Media literacy education* (or *media education*) are terms used to refer to the pedagogical processes used to develop media literacy. Because media literacy has developed from the work of educators from many disciplinary perspectives (including communication, education, the fine arts, and public health) in a number of different countries (including England, Canada, Australia, the United States, and others), questions of terminology, focus, and emphasis are debated. In the United States, two national membership organizations support the work of media literacy educators: the Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA) and the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME).

There are many different types of genres and formats within specific media and communication technologies, and media literacy programs may address these specific forms directly. For example, media literacy programs have included a focus on critical

analysis of newspapers and television news, print and TV advertising, magazines, popular music, and contemporary film. Many media literacy advocates and educators make use of a unifying framework: *key concepts* or questions that identify the central ideas associated with media literacy learning. The key concepts can be explored with children of different ages and with different types of media messages. These include the following:

Messages are constructions. The media do not present simple reflections of external reality. Rather, media messages are carefully crafted constructions that are the result of many decisions and determining factors.

Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. Individual media messages can be recognized within specific genres (e.g., cartoons, news, advertising, romance, horror, biography). Media messages make use of symbol systems, codes, and conventions that can be verbal, visual, auditory, musical, narrative, or digital. For example, in narrative films for children, the bumbling or evil adult is a character stereotype that is commonly used in creating conflict.

Audiences actively interpret messages. People construct meaning as they consume media messages. Message interpretation varies according to individual factors such as developmental level, personal needs and anxieties, situational factors, racial and sexual attitudes, and family and cultural backgrounds.

Media have embedded values and points of view. Explicitly or implicitly, media express ideological messages about issues such as human nature, social roles, authority and power, and the distribution of resources. Media messages provide the majority of the observations and experiences that people use to develop personal understandings of the world and how it works. Much of people's sense of reality is based on media messages containing representations that have been specifically constructed to embody points of view, attitudes, and values.

Media have commercial implications and exist within an economic context. Media literacy aims to encourage an awareness of how the media are influenced by commercial considerations and how economics and power affect message content, production techniques, and distribution. Many media products that children and young people consume are created as part of global business interests. Questions of ownership and control are important because a relatively small number of individuals decide what we watch, read, and hear in the media.

Media literacy can be developed within the family through informal communication between parents and children. Media literacy education has been implemented in elementary and secondary schools and in after-school programs. Over the past 20 years, there has been widespread growth in the resources and materials needed to teach media literacy to children and adolescents. A wide variety of instructional methodologies are used to teach media literacy, but most educators employ close analysis of media texts through questioning, role-playing or simulations, and media production exercises or activities. In the United States, most state education standards include media literacy outcomes as part of English language arts, fine arts, social studies, or health education, but implementation of media literacy is scattered and generally not widespread. Research on media literacy education has begun to demonstrate evidence about how children and young people can benefit from educational experiences that involve critically analyzing and composing messages using media tools and technologies.

—Renee Hobbs

See also Media Education, International; Media Literacy Programs

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MEDIA LITERACY PROGRAMS

Media literacy education is the process used to develop media literacy, defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms. Children and young people can benefit from opportunities to learn about mass

media, popular culture, and communication technologies. Media literacy programs may emphasize the critical examination of news, advertising, film, television, magazines, music, the Internet, and popular culture. Programs may also emphasize media production and creative expression.

Since the 1970s, media literacy has developed through the work of educators, artists, media professionals, and scholars who have implemented programs in schools and nonschool settings to explore mass media, popular culture, and communication technologies with children and young people. Many factors may lead educators to begin integrating media analysis and media production activities into the curriculum. Motivations may include a focus on increasing student motivation for learning; responding to ubiquitous elements of media culture, including sexism, violence, and materialism; expanding appreciation for alternative or noncommercial media; reducing the power of U.S. media corporations to control culture; enhancing technology skills; responding to student learning styles; strengthening students' recognition of how print and visual media work as forms of expression and communication; or enabling students to explore the constructed nature of cultural identity, social power, and values. Generally, most media literacy initiatives occur as the result of the initiative of a single individual or small team, working at a local level within the contexts of their school or nonprofit youth-serving organization.

Methods of instruction emphasize the process of critical analysis of a variety of print, visual, electronic, and digital texts through questioning and active discussion, as well as opportunities for children and young people to represent their own ideas through creating media in a wide variety of forms. Using critical questions to stimulate students' active cognitive response is increasingly a common classroom practice, and this instructional strategy has been extended to include the texts of popular culture, including television, movies, magazines, and popular music. Other instructional methods include role-playing, simulation, and media comparison-contrast activities. Media literacy has been integrated into all the K–12 subject areas, and numerous resource materials are available to support the work of elementary and secondary teachers in integrating media literacy into existing instruction. However, most media literacy programs, curriculum materials, and resources have been developed to align with the subject areas of English language arts and health education.

MEDIA LITERACY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Media literacy has long been part of English language arts education in many K–12 schools in a number of English-speaking nations. In the United States, the National Council of Teachers of English first adopted policy language supporting media literacy education in 1975, stating that the organization should continue

> to encourage teacher education programs which will enable teachers to promote media literacy in students; and cooperate with organizations and individuals representing teachers of journalism, the social sciences, and speech communication to promote the understanding and develop the insights students need to evaluate critically the messages disseminated by the mass media. (National Council of Teachers of English, 1975, p. 1)

In 2003, the organization adopted a policy encouraging preservice, in-service, and staff development programs to focus on new literacies, multimedia composition, and a broadened concept of literacy. Educators with interests in media literacy generally adopt perspectives from the disciplines of the humanities, semiotics, and cultural studies to guide their work, although some make use of media effects or psychological research on learning theory. Literacy educators are now routinely using the word *text* to refer to all the expressive forms that people use to create and share meaning, including traditional literary genres as well as media and popular culture. In the United States, media literacy has also been used in large high schools as a theme to create small learning communities, enabling teachers from several subject areas to make use of media literacy concepts in their classrooms with a smaller group of learners.

One example of a media literacy program in English language arts is the Pacesetter English curriculum. This course was designed by the College Board as an integrated program on instruction, professional development, and assessment designed to support a rigorous fourth-year high school course. It includes substantial units on authorship, voice, film, language, and the mediation of culture through representation. In an evaluation study conducted by the College Board, teachers using Pacesetter English reported more use of film and video, and participating students demonstrated higher levels of both reading and writing compared to a demographically matched control group. Research has also provided evidence to show that media literacy can

improve critical thinking and communication skills, including reading and writing skills.

A school-based media literacy program in a particular school might take many forms. At the middle school or high school levels, some teachers will include popular culture texts and media studies topics in their existing English or social studies classes. Other teachers may implement special instructional units on specific media genres, such as journalism and the role of news in society, advertising and cultural identity, or stereotyping in film or television. Others will examine similarities and differences between literature and film. Although plentiful teaching materials support teachers' work in this area, there is some resistance to media literacy education among educators. Because most teachers do not learn anything about media literacy in their undergraduate education programs at colleges and universities, many teachers are unfamiliar with the concept. In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Act has reduced the time available to teachers for enrichment activities like media literacy.

MEDIA LITERACY IN HEALTH EDUCATION

As a component of health education, media literacy curriculum materials have been created to address media violence and aggression, nutrition, body image, substance abuse prevention, and other topics. Most health educators in the United States now include some focus on analyzing advertising in the context of understanding substance abuse, including alcohol and tobacco. Hundreds of regional health conferences between 1995 and 2000 featured presentations and workshops demonstrating media literacy as part of health education, and health professionals are a major subgroup of the membership of the Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA), one of the two national membership organizations for media literacy. Major federal organizations including the Centers for Substance Abuse and Prevention, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development have supported media literacy as a means to promote child and adolescent health by developing curriculum materials, hosting teacher education conferences, or providing funding for programs. Research has shown that media literacy education can reduce susceptibility to tobacco use among children and increase skepticism about perceptions of the thin ideal in beauty and fashion magazines among adolescent girls. In one study, parents of preschoolers who received media literacy education emphasizing nutrition and food advertising learned how to critically analyze television commercials about food products, which resulted in increased awareness of the need to communicate to their children about what is truthful in media messages.

YOUTH MEDIA PROGRAMS

An increasing number of nonschool programs are using media literacy concepts in their work with children and young people in after-school programs, summer camps, and other nonschool settings. The term *youth media* is emerging to describe the work of a broad range of nonschool organizations that use a variety of media and technologies to serve youth. Such programs typically involve older children and adolescents in some forms of critical analysis and media production activities. Youth media practitioners may emphasize media production as a form of social activism in local communities, and most youth media programs reflect the particular values of the social justice advocates, youth development specialists, media artists, and technology access providers who conduct these programs. Authentic representation and voice are emphasized in programs designed to give adolescents opportunities to strengthen leadership skills and advocate for issues of concern to them.

—Renee Hobbs

See also Media Education, International

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MEDIA MATTERS CAMPAIGN

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the national organization for education and support of more than 60,000 pediatricians and pediatric specialists, has been involved in the research and policy on effects of the media on children and youth for decades. In 1983, the Task Force on Children and Television studied the impact of TV and suggested ways to emphasize and improve the educational content. Subsequently, the AAP Committee on Communications, later called the Committee on Public Education, created (and revised as needed) several policy statements concerned with the impact of media exposure.

In 1997, the AAP launched Media Matters, a national public education campaign to raise awareness and teach pediatricians, parents, children, and youth about mass media influence on health, including television, movies, popular music, the Internet, computer and video games, and advertising. Media Matters used a "train the trainer" approach, giving pediatricians knowledge and specific tools for educating children, youth, and families about media. In addition, pediatricians received information about the various health risks posed by media exposure, and they were encouraged to identify the possible role of media exposure in conditions such as obesity, aggressive behavior, substance use, or academic difficulties. A cornerstone of Media Matters is encouraging media education and promoting media literacy within families and communities, specifically learning and incorporating the ability to analyze media through critical viewing and thinking.

Pediatricians involve themselves in Media Matters through regional or national workshops and helpful resource kits. "Media Education in the Practice Setting" provides a written overview of the pediatrician's role in media and guidelines integrating media education into patient encounters. The material provides suggestions for healthy media use habits, echoing existing recommendations found in the AAP policy statements. "Media History," a checkoff form for parents about children's media use, allows pediatricians to focus on problem media habits and provide recommendations when necessary. Pediatricians often speak at schools, community events, and professional conferences or to the news media or government representatives, important venues for the dissemination of information about media education.

Media Matters includes other features supporting the public education goal of helping pediatricians, parents, children, and adolescents gain awareness about the influence of media on health:

- Campaign materials ("Media Education in the Practice Setting" and the "Media History" form)
- Public education brochures ("Understanding the Impact of Media on Children and Teens," as well as brochures for parents on media ratings, the Internet, and television) and fact sheets
- Scholarly articles on children, adolescents, and media
- Testimony on children, adolescents, and media
- The Holroyd-Sherry Award recognizing a physician's contribution to media as a public health issue
- A network of "Media Matters Team" pediatricians available for educating others in the field
- Support for the Los Angeles-based Media Resource Team (since 1994), providing consultation with the media industry regarding accurate portrayal of pediatric health issues
- Support for national initiatives, including National TV-Turnoff Week
- Media Matters website
- Links to other media education websites
- Letter-writing templates
- Leadership education conferences and workshops (funding dependent)
- Current AAP policy statements on a variety of topics, including
  - Children, adolescents, and the Internet
  - Children, adolescents, and television
  - Gender stereotypes and body image in the media
  - Media education
  - Media influence and substance abuse
  - Media violence
  - Sexuality, contraception, and the media

—Marjorie J. Hogan

See also American Academy of Pediatrics; Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Effects, Models of; Public Health Campaigns

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WEBSITE

Media Matters: mediamatters@aap.org

MEDIA PRACTICE MODEL

The Media Practice Model is a graphic representation that illustrates how adolescents use media in their everyday lives. First presented in 1995, it grew out of a collaborative student/faculty project that explored how teenagers used the mass media (television, radio, magazines, movies, and newspapers) when forging their sexual identities. Since then, it has proved to be a robust way to describe the role of media in the lives of teens not only within the context of teenage sexuality but also in general. Breaking with a tradition of studying media primarily from a quantitative research perspective, the model was based on a series of qualitative studies that focused on adolescents' room culture. In their rooms (most often their bedrooms), teenagers of the 1990s listened to music, watched television, read magazines, talked on the phone, and did homework. A privileged few had access to the Internet. Millennial teens engage in these same activities in the privacy of their rooms, but they also spend time playing video games and connecting with friends through instant messenger, email, blogs, and online diaries and photo albums. Much of the time, teens' engagement with media involves identity work, the process of creating a sense of self in the context of their immediate and larger social worlds. Unconsciously or purposefully, they draw on the media to help make sense of their lives.

The media constitute a cultural tool kit from which teens can extract social capital, cultural models, mood enhancers, and (imagined) companions. Often, teens bring their finds from that tool kit into their bedrooms or dorm rooms, where they create a material culture of posters, collages, and media hardware. What shows up on the walls, floors, beds, and shelves in their rooms points to a below-the-surface media role that is complex, linked to developmental factors, and intertwined in everyday life. Room culture research confirming these realities led to the core ingredients of the media practice model.

Graphically simple but conceptually complex, the model draws on four important research streams—British cultural studies, practice theory in the tradition of Bourdieu and Willis, the sociocultural-historical school of Russian psychology, and mainstream communications and socialization theories—to explain the relationship between teens and media.

Adapted from Johnson's conceptualization of the production, circulation, and consumption of cultural texts, the model is drawn as a circuit to highlight the interrelatedness among its core components: identity and media selection, interaction, and application (see Fig. 1). The arrows in the model point to a chronological, not a causal relationship among these elements; their purpose is to suggest that teens' interactions with media are part of the dialectical, seamless process of becoming, of existing in the world. Media (meant to include media channels, content, and forms) are understood to be important cultural *mediating devices*, whose influence is amplified or restrained by active individuals engaged in the everyday activities and routines, called *practice*, that constitute daily life. It is significant that the influence of teens' everyday media activities is, in turn, influenced by their lived experience. Consequently, the term is placed above the circuit to signify that teens' differentiated, dynamic media practices will vary in accordance with their lived experience.

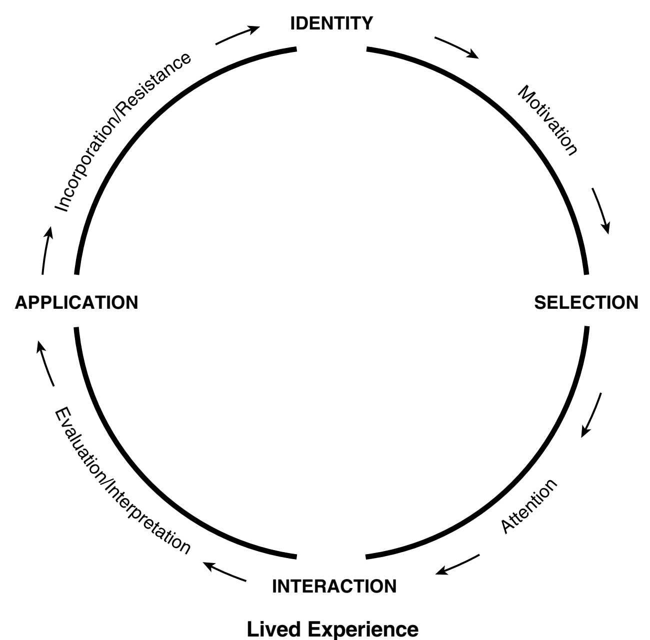

Figure 1 The Media Practice Model

SOURCE: J. R. Steele (1991).

Far more nuanced than the demographic variables of gender, age, and race, lived experience should be thought of as an individual's experience of *living through* a particular place and time with a unique body, intelligence quotient, sense of humor, threshold for anger, sensitivity about race, and so forth. It is a theme that Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky took up from a developmental perspective in the 1920s. He emphasized the integral role of mediated action in development and insisted on the situated character of the cultural tools that mediate such action. In keeping with Vygotsky's perspective, the inclusion of lived experience positions media practice in the concrete sociocultural-historical reality that is unique for every individual.

Identity. We know from psychology and sociology that constructing a coherent sense of self is one of the key tasks of adolescence. Because teens draw heavily from media as they explore who they are and the "possible selves" they might become, identity is featured at the top of the circuit to underscore its central role in media practice. Research suggests that teens' sense of who they are (personal identity) and where they fit in the world (social identity) drives their choices about what media they will attend to under what circumstances (selection) and influences what they take away (application) from those encounters (interaction).

Selection. Technological advances provide 21st-century adolescents with a huge array of media options from which to draw. Possibly as a result of all these choices, today's teens and young adults are remarkably adept at multitasking. It is not unusual for a 16- or 20-year-old to talk on the phone, check email on the computer and keep an eye on the television, all at the same time. If the TV is muted, they also can enjoy their favorite music, possibly filtered through a surround-sound speaker system connected to a carousel CD changer that provides up to 6 hours of uninterrupted listening. Clearly, the amount of attention focused on such media activities will vary, depending on the immediate circumstances. Hence, motivation and attention appear on the perimeter of the circuit to emphasize that such intervening variables affect not only what media teens choose to attend to but also how attentive they actually are.

Interaction. Conceptualized in terms of practice, interaction is seen as active engagement with media. As such, it must be understood within the context of the whole person—the thinking, feeling, moving person who cannot separate the mind from the emotions, nor the emotions from the body's physiological reactions to affective stimuli. As such, interaction is defined as the cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement with media that produces change. Evaluation and interpretation of media content are cognitive activities, whereas letting a song put one in the mood for love is a form of affective interaction. Like motivation and attention, these terms appear on the perimeter of the circuit to suggest their role as intervening variables. They are meant to be illustrative, not restrictive. Involvement, meaning-making, or decoding could readily replace them, depending on what was being explicated.

Application. This component of the model comes closest to what researchers traditionally have referred to as media effects. From the perspective of practice, it means the concrete and symbolic ways in which adolescents use media in their everyday lives as they work to become adults. The element of variability in media practice, albeit limited by content and the situated contexts in which media fare is produced and consumed, suggests that application is anything but fixed. Rather, teens can use media to reproduce in the self the attitudes, values, beliefs, and ways of being (incorporation) that they find in the media, or conversely, they can use media to move away from mainstream norms (resistance). What teens take from media, in the form of incorporation or resistance, is fed back into their evolving identities, affecting in turn the next or ongoing interaction with media. The Media Practice Model represents this seamless, dialogic flow.

—Jeanne Rogge Steele

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Cultural Identity; Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Effects, Models of

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MESSAGE INTERPRETATION PROCESS MODEL

The message interpretation process (MIP) model tracks media effects from an information processing perspective. The model (Figure 2) has evolved largely out of social cognitive theory, expectancy theory, and dual-process theories of attitude change. It proposes that logical comparisons and affective responses create routes to decision making that interact and feed into later-stage beliefs as messages progressively become internalized or rejected.

According to the MIP model, individuals apply heuristics to a message based on logic (such as credibility) or on affect (such as liking). They also can reflect on a message in considerable depth through logical analysis or wishful thinking. Furthermore, affect can append biases to otherwise logical analyses. College students, for example, incorporate media messages into their perceptions of social norms for other students' use of alcohol based on both media messages portraying the apparent desirability of alcohol use and the perceived realism of such messages.

According to the MIP model, individuals employ partly logical and partly affective interpretation strategies. These strategies require teachable skills. Accordingly, the model has been used successfully to evaluate media literacy interventions.

The model posits that individuals of all ages take an active role in their socialization through decision making that makes use of media messages. Because individuals process information through a series of decision-making filters, sometimes called benchmarks, a message can encounter rejection at any step. Consideration of these filters can prevent overly optimistic predictions of media effects. Conversely, evaluations that neglect the filters may underestimate the effects of media use because direct-effects models do not account for indirect effects that cumulatively have a considerable impact.

Perceived realism commonly represents the entry-level variable to the logic-oriented route in the decision-making model. Perceived realism refers to the extent to which a portrayal seems accurate and representative—that is, "like most people" in the real world. Realistic messages have a better chance of surviving a tougher filter, called perceived similarity, the assessment of how closely the portrayal reflects normative personal experiences. High similarity or congruence with perceived norms of relevant reference groups can lead to the next filter of identification, characterized by the desire to emulate a portrayal. Identification reliably predicts the expectation that doing something consistent with what has been seen in the media will bring positive results, known as expectancies, which reliably predict behavior. The entry-level filter representing the affect-oriented route to decision, which can bypass or bias the logic-oriented route, is how desirable or undesirable a message seems.

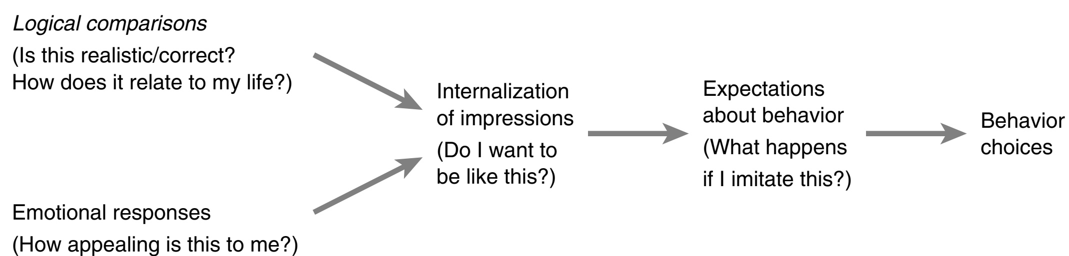

Figure 2 The Message Interpretation Process. According to the message interpretation process model, individuals apply logic-based and affect-based filters to media messages to determine acceptance or rejection of perceived messages.

SOURCE: Used by permission of Erica Weintraub Austin.

The MIP model has been tested on samples ranging from third graders to college-age students, with similar patterns emerging from the data, suggesting that it applies well across developmentally diverse populations. By identifying key interpretation-based filters that individuals use to evaluate messages, it can help explain why messages succeed or fail and can identify weaknesses in the interpretation process that media literacy interventions can strengthen.

—Erica Weintraub Austin

See also Adult Mediation Strategies; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Information Processing, Developmental Differences and; Media Effects; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory

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MOBILE TELEPHONES

During the past decade, adolescents and even preadolescents have begun using mobile (or cellular) telephones in unexpected numbers. In the early stages of its development and commercialization, the technology was often framed around its use in business and professional settings. However, the range of use and the groups who adopted the device far exceeded these early expectations. In the case of mobile telephony, adoption by adolescents—reported in Asia, Scandinavia and the broader European context, and Israel, and to a lesser degree in the United States—was truly one of the surprising dimensions.

Adolescent adoption has changed the dynamics of the industry and has exposed some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about the role of teens in society. Adolescent use was made possible through the drive by teens to interact with their peers and to cautiously emancipate themselves from their parents. It has also led to the reformulation of the mobile telephone market in the form of prepaid subscriptions, the rise of texting, and the establishment of secondary industries such as ring tones, icons, and mobile phone covers. The adolescent market also has contributed to the convergence of mobile music devices, camera phones, networked gaming, and a wide variety of other functions into a single portable device.

Adolescence is the context in which the adoption of mobile communication took place. Adolescence—a social institution that is particular to industrialization—is a phase of life where individuals can emancipate themselves from parents. Emancipation is necessary because in a rapidly changing world, the experience of the child will necessarily be different from that of his or her parents.

The peer group can be seen as the midwife of emancipation and provides a setting in which adolescents can participate in decision making, explore the boundaries of acceptable behavior, and test themselves in a social area outside of the protective—and perhaps stifling—familial sphere. The mobile telephone is an exceptional tool for this task.

Several specific social impacts of the mobile telephone on the situation of adolescents are worthy of mention. They include (1) microcoordination, (2) facilitation of identity development and emancipation, (3) safety and control, (4) the culture of texting, (5) gendering of the technology, (6) the role of the device in dating and in the exploration of sexuality, and finally (7) the role of the device in the area of bullying and deviance.

Microcoordination. Perhaps the most profound effect of the mobile telephone—for adolescents as well as other groups—is its contribution to the coordination of people in modern society. In an era when daily life often includes movement between a wide variety of locations (home, school, a job, free-time activities, entertainment locales, etc.) the traditional system of geographically fixed telephone locations is not as functional as mobile telephones. The latter enable users to call directly, regardless of the location of the caller and the person called, which allows for far more nuanced real-time microcoordination.

Facilitation of identity development and emancipation. The peer group is an important influence as adolescents become emancipated from their home of orientation and develop an independent identity. In the context of the peer group, individuals can participate in decision making, the establishment of peer style, and so on.

The mobile phone is important here on two counts. First, it provides a personalized communications channel that allows adolescents unprecedented access to each other. The peer group can engage in functional, expressive, and merely sociable interaction at the drop of a hat. Second, the mobile telephone—that is, the telephone handset—is an object of consumption on a par with other personal artifacts, such as glasses, watches, jewelry, and clothes. In its role as a fashion item, it lets adolescents test out their ability to consume appropriate artifacts. The decision to use one or another device is a decision regarding not only the functional aspects of the device but also the individual's sense of style. In both cases, the mobile telephone has a role in adolescents' development as independent actors separate from parents.

Safety and control. While adolescence is a period characterized by the individual seeking out wider horizons, issues of safety and parental control also get played out. Research has shown that the original motivation for having a mobile phone—at least the one that is used in discussions with parents—is that it provides a safety link. When adolescents begin to move into the broader world, parents are often motivated to provide their children with a way to get in touch "just in case something happens." The device also allows parents to gather information on their children's activities and to exercise some control over where they are and what they are up to, although teens can use strategies to manage this accessibility such as claiming that their battery was dead or that they had turned the sound off. The mobile phone also allows for expressive interaction when the child is away from home, for example, at summer camp, or in situations where parents are divorced.

The culture of texting. Texting is one of the quintessential teen media applications. This is particularly true in East Asia and in Europe. Adolescents were the first to use text messages, and they have developed the practice in terms of its linguistic dimensions and its role in the broader use of mobile communication. They have integrated texting into their daily lives, and the way that they stay in touch with peers and parents through texting has found a role even in the negotiation of romantic relationships. Adolescents have learned to use texting as an unobtrusive form of interaction, which can be used as a covert way to stay in touch while in more staid settings such as school. Adolescents have developed forms of interaction such as specialized abbreviations and slang, although this aspect of use is often overplayed in the press. Although current technologies are likely to be replaced by others that are more advanced, adolescents have pioneered the use of asynchronous, mobile text-based interaction.

Gendering of the technology. The mobile telephone has been adopted by male and female adolescents at different rates and for somewhat different purposes. Analysis has shown that males often adopt mobile communication devices and techniques earlier than females. However, the analysis also shows that females tailor the technology to social interaction. Whereas males may experience a stronger fascination with the technology in itself, females use the technology for social ends. Clearly, some females are quick to adopt technically sophisticated uses, and males also use the devices for social interaction. Nonetheless, males are often the first to investigate the potentials of the technology, whereas the females adopt the uses that facilitate social interaction.

Dating and exploring sexuality. Just as the mobile telephone gives the peer group an open channel for interaction, it also plays into the contact between adolescents as they establish, maintain, and end romantic relationships. During the preliminary stage of romantic interaction and after the nascent couple has met face-to-face, there may be a period when they exchange text messages. This is an easy way to work slowly through the process of determining the suitability of the other person. Messages can be carefully edited, in some cases, with the aid of friends. Texting may also turn into flirtatious or erotic interaction that is calculated to entice the prospective partner. Indeed, there is a correspondence between mobile telephone use and sexual experience. After the establishment of a relationship, the mobile telephone provides the couple with the ability to exchange endearments that might not otherwise be possible. It is reported that some couples have a nearly obligatory responsibility to send a last goodnight text message and a similar good-morning message. The mobile telephone has also found its role for couples in the process of breaking up. Reluctance to respond to text messages, inaccessibility via the mobile phone, and even "Dear John" or "Dear Johanna" text messages are used as a gentle—or perhaps cowardly—way to indicate that the romantic flame is burning out.

Bullying, deviance, and dangerous behavior. Finally, the mobile telephone has been used in various forms of deviance and bullying. In the United Kingdom, the phenomenon of "happy slapping," an assault on an innocent bystander, is videoed by a peer using a mobile phone camera. Bullying of student colleagues either by sending anonymous text messages or by taking illicit photographs of them in unguarded moments such as in the school shower is another common issue. Finally, research shows that teens who engage in a variety of deviant behaviors—theft, fighting, and narcotic use—also use the mobile telephone to coordinate among themselves. In the case of happy slapping and the text/camera phone bullying, there is clearly a link between the technology and the behavior. In the case of other types of deviance, the mobile phone has not caused the conduct but rather is used to implement an already existing behavior.

A final issue here is the use of the mobile telephone while driving. Although this is dangerous for all demographic groups, it has been found to be particularly dangerous for teen drivers.

Thus at several levels, the mobile telephone fits into the adolescent lifestyle, and because of this, it has become a symbol of youth par excellence.

—Rich Ling

See also Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Email; Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Social

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MOOD MANAGEMENT THEORY

Mood management theory focuses on the ways in which individuals select media as a means of affecting or "managing" their moods. This theory generally predicts that individuals' media selections reflect, at least in part, motivations to intensify or prolong positive moods and to alleviate or diminish negative moods. Unlike uses and gratifications approaches, mood management theory does not assume that viewers are necessarily aware of their motivations for viewing or willing to articulate them. As a result, research from a mood management perspective typically employs experimental methods in which viewers' moods or affective states are manipulated, and resulting media selections are then observed or measured. The vast majority of research on mood management has employed adult samples; however, some research suggests that younger viewers may show patterns similar to those of adults in their use of media selections for mood management. A small number of studies have studied very young children, and some research suggests ways in which adolescents may use media for mood management.

Mood management theory offers numerous predictions concerning the ways in which individuals will use media to manage their mood states. For example, individuals who are overstimulated or stressed are predicted to select media content that is soothing or relaxing, whereas individuals who are understimulated or bored are predicted to select content that is lively and exciting. Likewise, individuals who are in bad moods are predicted to avoid media content that is negative or sad and to show preferences for media content that depicts uplifting and happy situations and characters.

Over the years, numerous studies have offered support for the basic assumptions and hypotheses of mood management theory across a wide variety of media content and genres. For example, research has shown that individuals in bad moods are inclined to select comedic entertainment (provided that the humor is not hostile), whereas they are disinclined to select newspaper stories featuring bad news. Similarly, individuals who are bored show an increased preference for exciting programming such as sporting events and game shows, whereas individuals who are stressed show an increased preference for more calming content such as nature programming and soothing musical performances.

There are several reasons why media consumption for purposes of mood management may become most pronounced during the adolescent years. First, adolescence is more strongly associated with intense mood swings, higher levels of stress, and greater self-reflection. Second, adolescents likely have greater control of their media selections than do young children. The idea that mood management may be particularly salient during the teen years and young adulthood is supported by research reporting that adolescents' consumption of media use is often related to exploring the "private self" and that their extensive use of music often reflects motivations related to emotional expression and stress reduction.

Whereas mood management theory has received abundant support in a variety of empirical studies, selection and enjoyment of some types of media content appear at odds with mood management predictions. For example, the enjoyment of tear-jerkers and the frequency with which mournful love songs are enjoyed by listeners (and particularly teen listeners) seem inconsistent with the idea that people use media to maintain positive moods. Similarly, a large number of children's programs feature decidedly sad or traumatic portrayals, including *Bambi*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *Old Yeller*, among others.

Under what circumstances might people find negative or sad media portrayals appealing? Perhaps surprisingly, some research suggests that individuals may be particularly likely to select such fare when they are in sad or bad moods—a finding that appears to be opposite to what mood management predicts. For example, Louise Mares and Joanne Cantor found that lonely older viewers were more interested in viewing entertainment featuring sad stories about older characters rather than stories featuring happy or successful characters. Furthermore, after viewing sad portrayals, lonely viewers reported more positive mood states than did lonely viewers who had seen uplifting portrayals. The idea that people in bad moods may be attracted to sad or negative media entertainment has also been demonstrated in terms of musical preferences. For

example, Rhonda Gibson, Charles Aust, and Dolf Zillmann found that adolescents reported that they would have greater interest in listening to love-lamenting than love-celebrating music if they had been spurned by a romantic partner, whereas the opposite musical tastes were evident if they had learned that a romantic interest was reciprocated.

Although attraction to sad or negative media portrayals presents challenges to the assumptions of mood management theory, a variety of possible explanations for such preferences are consistent with mood management predictions. For example, some researchers have suggested that individuals may be able to make themselves feel better about their own situations by comparing themselves to others who are worse off. Alternatively, viewers who are sad or blue may choose to view sad entertainment as a way of reassuring themselves that they are not alone in their problems. Similarly, viewing the suffering of beloved characters may be informative to viewers in bad moods, as these types of portrayals may provide possible courses of action that could ultimately lead to mood repair.

Clearly, this list of possible reasons why viewers may select and enjoy media content that is designed to elicit bad or negative states is far from complete. However, these explanations share a common theme: the ultimate restoration of positive moods. Consequently, although choosing to view sad films or listen to mournful love songs may appear contradictory to mood management assumptions, such behaviors may well represent evidence for the validity and scope of this theory.

—Mary Beth Oliver and Jinhee Kim

See also Media Entertainment; Media Genre Preferences; Selective Exposure; Uses and Gratifications Theory

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MOTHERHOOD PROJECT

As a subdivision of the nonprofit organization, the Institute for American Values, the Motherhood Project strives to educate and promote the renewed concept of motherhood and help mothers meet the challenges of mothering in modern society.

Enola Aird founded the Motherhood Project in 1999. In the past few years, the Motherhood Project has been actively holding group meetings of mothers, organizing symposiums discussing issues directly dealing with the welfare of mothers and children, advocating children's and mothers' rights before Congress, and conducting original research examining the relationships between motherhood and society. The Motherhood Project has become one of the most influential advocacy groups for mothers and children. The Motherhood Project is advised by the Mothers' Council, which consists of mothers of diverse backgrounds.

The relationship between advertising and children's well-being is one of the major concerns of the Motherhood Project. In 2001, it published the report, *Watch Out for Children: A Mother's Statement to Advertisers*, in which it accuses the advertisers of harming children by instilling values that are at odds with the values mothers try to teach their children.

Self-control and caring for others are two examples. The report argues that all adults should watch out for children. Based on the values that mothers cherish to nurture their children, the Motherhood Project put forward a "Mother's Code for Advertisers," which takes account of all types of advertising. The code calls for advertisers to refrain from advertising to children at schools, targeting children under the age of 8, engaging in product placement in media programs, conducting research to develop advertising and marketing aimed at children and adolescents, advertising the concepts of selfishness and instant gratification, and sponsoring programs featuring gratuitous sex or violence.

Following up on *Watch Out for Children: A Mother's Statement to Advertisers*, in 2004, the Motherhood Project issued *A Mother's Day Report*, an open letter to the advertisers and marketers. The Mothers' Council sent out 66 letters to various industry leaders to urge them to take immediate actions to improve their self-regulatory practices. In addition, the Council also calls for the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the National Advertising Review Committee to develop new guidelines to keep up with the new trends in advertising practices, create a seal of approval for those who adhere to the guidelines, and diversify its advisory board. Many companies responded to the open letter of the Motherhood Project. Moreover, both CARU and the Entertainment Software Rating Board have agreed to consider the suggestions.

The Motherhood Project also published its *Motherhood Study* in May 2005, in which it surveyed more than 2,000 mothers about the attitudes, values, and concerns that they have about motherhood in contemporary society. Among other findings, the mothers in the survey expressed concern about the influence of media, in particular advertisements, on their children. In the report, the Motherhood Project encouraged all mothers to voice their views and concerns to the organization and urged the public to listen to what mothers are saying.

—Xiaomei Cai

See also Advertising, Regulation of; Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU)

WEBSITE

The Motherhood Project: http://www.motherhoodproject.org

MOTHERS, MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF

The word *mother* packs an emotional wallop, so it is not surprising that motherhood traditionally attracts attention in the media. Mothers nab headlines for juggling families and careers—and for killing their children. Depictions of mothers elicit laughter and tears on television and in movies. Their presence or absence in the workplace has shaped magazine content for decades. Since the 1980s, however, motherhood has sparked an unusual degree of interest and controversy. In 2000, *Ms. Magazine* declared it a media fixation.

MOTHERS IN THE NEWS

Journalistic portrayals of mothers tend to focus on the extremes—the exemplary and the horrific. Exemplary mothers include celebrities, who typically manage to maintain their looks, homes, and careers while still making time for their families. One example is Catherine Zeta-Jones, who appeared glamorous and triumphant at the Academy Awards in 2003 a few weeks before giving birth to her second child. At the other extreme are "killer moms." Examples include Susan Smith and Andrea Yates, mothers who drowned their children.

Less sensational mothers often appear in news stories about single motherhood, minority issues, and family health. Single mothers often have been described as single by choice, dependent on the government, or less than ideal parents, as was television's Murphy Brown. Minority mothers are disproportionately depicted in the news as "welfare queens" and linked with abusive use of alcohol and crack (a form of cocaine). Mothers in general are depicted as responsible for their children's health and welfare.

MOTHERS IN MAGAZINES

Magazines depict mothers in terms of contradictions. Some portrayals affirm a particular role; others condemn it. In mainstream magazines, four types of maternal contradictions are prominent: (1) mothers who are selfless/selfish, (2) mothers who foster independence/dependence in children, (3) mothers who succeed/fail in the domestic sphere or fail/succeed in the public sphere, and (4) mothers who are natural and instinctive/need

expert help. Such depictions have fostered what some observers describe as "mother wars," pitting at-home and employed mothers against each other.

Contradictory portrayals have evolved over several decades. In the 1950s, popular women's magazines such as *Parents, Ladies Home Journal,* and *Good Housekeeping* reflected the type of families that sociologists had pronounced "normal," those with the father as breadwinner and the mother as homemaker. Mothers were depicted as nurturing, loving, and moral. The 1960s brought two portraits of mothers—career mothers/serious community volunteers and good wife/mother. Working mothers rose to prominence in the 1970s. Magazines depicted them as "wonder women." *Working Mother,* a magazine tailored to the needs of working women, championed federally funded day care. Magazines restyled housewives as *homemakers* engaged in the "most noble profession." In the 1980s, the image of working mothers lost much of its glamour. Magazines portrayed working mothers as neurotic and stressed out. Neotraditional mothers, who abandoned or put on hold their careers for the sake of their children, also were featured. In the 1990s, "new momism," which was characterized by mothers' dedication to their children, began to resemble the "feminine mystique" of the 1950s. Working mothers were portrayed as "absentee moms."

Maternal contradictions also characterize portrayals of lesbian mothers. In the straight press, lesbian mothers have alternately been labeled *nonprocreative*—a position inherently opposed to family values—or recruiters for an abnormal lifestyle, with normal families assumed to be heterosexual. Lesbian mothers have been depicted in the lesbian press as both traitors to their sexuality and leaders among feminists.

MOTHERS IN VISUAL MEDIA

Mothers have been portrayed on television since its inception, figuring prominently in situation comedies and soap operas. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, sitcom mothers played by Lucille Ball, Gertrude Berg, and others often refused to stay in their place, resisting the notion that women's roles should be confined to the domestic arena. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, these characters had been succeeded by more submissive mothers in shows such as *Father Knows Best* and *Leave It to Beaver.* The feminist movement brought more working mothers to television, primarily in blue-collar and service sector jobs. The majority, however, were full-time homemakers, as portrayed in shows such as *The Waltons.* In the 1980s, most TV women began going to work, and many TV mothers held glamorous jobs, as did Clare, the lawyer-mom on *The Cosby Show.* By the 1990s, the work status of television women more closely matched that of real women, with clerical work the most common job in both cases.

Motherhood has played an increasingly prominent role in soap operas. In soaps of the 1970s, pregnancies occurred only rarely and often had negative results. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, an increasing number of characters were portrayed as pregnant women or mothers. Themes often focused on marriage, shaky relationships, speculation about who fathered the child, and numerous health complications.

Television advertisements of the 1970s typically portrayed women as mothers or housewives and often depicted them as being of low intelligence. By 2000, women were more likely to be shown as nurturers. TV shows about black families typically portray mothers as single parents, good humored and dominant, efficient, and effective decision makers. Jewish and Italian mothers, in contrast, often are depicted as selfish, pushy, domineering, or whiny.

Film portrayals of mothers often parallel those of other media. Hitchcock's films portrayed both good and bad mothers, but three of his most famous—*Psycho, Marnie,* and *The Birds*—depicted terrible mothers who created life and then drew it in again. Imagery of false or destructive mothers is a staple of science fiction films. Disney films typically have marginalized mothers and elevated fathers. Several films of the 1980s and early 1990s employed portrayals of both career and traditional mothers, with career mothers portrayed less sympathetically.

MOTHERS IN OTHER MEDIA

Few studies have examined portrayals of mothers in auditory media, although one survey found that working mothers prefer radio to other types of mass media. Topics offered by radio shows that target mothers appear to parallel those of women's magazines. Similarly, few studies have focused on depictions of mothers on the Internet. Author Lisa Nakamura, however, dismisses as myth the notion that cyberspace is raceless, genderless, and sexuality free.

—Myra Gregory Knight

See also Family, Television Portrayals of; Family Relationships, Television and; Parenting Styles

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MOTION PICTURE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MPAA)

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) is a trade association for the movie industry in the United States. The MPAA is best known for administering the voluntary film rating system. It is also active in lobbying on behalf of its members, including a campaign to preserve copyright interests in the digital age. MPAA membership consists of seven major studios: Disney, Sony, MGM, Paramount, Twentieth Century Fox, Universal, and Warner Brothers.

The MPAA was formed in 1922 in an effort to quell criticism of provocative movie content and deal with the public image of the industry in the wake of several high-profile scandals involving movie stars. Members of the movie industry accepted this self-regulatory system as preferable to the threat of government censorship.

One of the primary tasks of the MPAA is to assign ratings to forthcoming films. The purpose of the ratings is to provide parents guidance in making judgments about what movies they allow their children to see. The current rating system is largely age-based and includes:

G—General Audiences: All ages admitted

PG—Parental Guidance Suggested: Some material may not be suitable for children

PG-13—Parents Strongly Cautioned: Some material may be in appropriate for children under 13

R—Restricted: Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian

NC-17: No one 17 and younger admitted

In addition to rating movies themselves, advertisements and preshow trailers for films must also be screened by the MPAA.

The ratings system is criticized on several different levels. One argument is that the system as administered constrains depictions of sex far more than it does violence. Also, there is concern that the system encourages ratings based on relatively inconsequential elements of the movie (like the number of times sexually suggestive language is used) rather than looking at the film as a whole (e.g., does it responsibly portray the consequences of sexual activity). Furthermore, recent studies have demonstrated "ratings creep," whereby the MPAA tolerates content in a movie that a few years ago would have received a more restrictive rating.

In recent years, the MPAA has also become active in lobbying for changes in copyright laws to protect against unauthorized distribution of movies. The organization has pursued lawsuits against file-sharing sites on the World Wide Web, under the auspices of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Along with the Recording Industry Association of America, the MPAA has also filed lawsuits against specific individuals (mostly adolescents and college students) who have illegally downloaded copyrighted material.

Jack Valenti was president of the MPAA from 1966 to 2004. He had a high profile as an active lobbyist for the movie industry. Since Valenti's retirement, Dan Glickman, who was a Cabinet member under President Clinton, is serving as the organization's president.

—Jennifer L. Lambe

See also Aggression, Movies and; Movies (various entries); Peer Groups, File Sharing Among; Ratings Systems, Parental Use of; Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation; Regulation, Movies

WEBSITE

The Motion Picture Association of America: http://www.mpaa.org

MOVIES, HISTORY OF

Children and adolescents have been an important segment of the movie audience since the earliest years of the motion pictures. Until the advent of television, the movies were a regular feature of children's leisure hours, and they continue to be today in their modern incarnation on video and DVD. Young people have also been instrumental in determining what audiences saw (or did not see) at the movies. The public's concerns about the effects of movies on children and Hollywood's desire to appeal to the lucrative youth market have profoundly shaped American cinema.

THE SILENT FILM ERA

The earliest motion pictures were exhibited in the 1890s, first as a curiosity, then gaining popularity as an inexpensive entertainment shown in nickelodeons. By the 1910s, there were more than 10,000 nickelodeons in the United States, and motion pictures had become a mass media. Some of the earliest motion pictures were based on children's literature, such as George Méliès's *Cinderella* (1899), or featured children, such as Louis Lumiére's *Watering the Gardener* (1895).

In the silent film era of the 1920s, children largely watched the same films viewed by adults. Movie stars popular with young people at that time included Buster Keaton, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and the Keystone Cops. Charlie Chaplin was one of the most beloved entertainers of that period, and his 1921 film *The Kid* drew particularly from a young audience due to the performance of his child co-star, Jackie Coogan. Young audiences also reveled in the cartoon antics of Felix the Cat, the heroics of a German shepherd named Rin Tin Tin, and the adventures of Tom Mix, a movie cowboy notorious for his amazing stunts astride a horse. Youngsters in Great Britain enjoyed many of the same films as their American counterparts, as well as British-made silent films, such as those featuring a patriotic hero named Lieutenant Rose.

Although children mainly saw the same movies as their parents, they often saw them at separate afternoon matinee screenings. By showing movies for children at times when most adult moviegoers were working, theaters could fill otherwise empty seats. Moreover, because children were smaller, more ticket-buying children could be squeezed onto the movable benches found at the time in many nickelodeons. The conditions for children at these early matinees led to several tragic incidents, most notably in the Uni ted Kingdom, when overcrowding resulted in injuries and even fatalities due to suffocation.

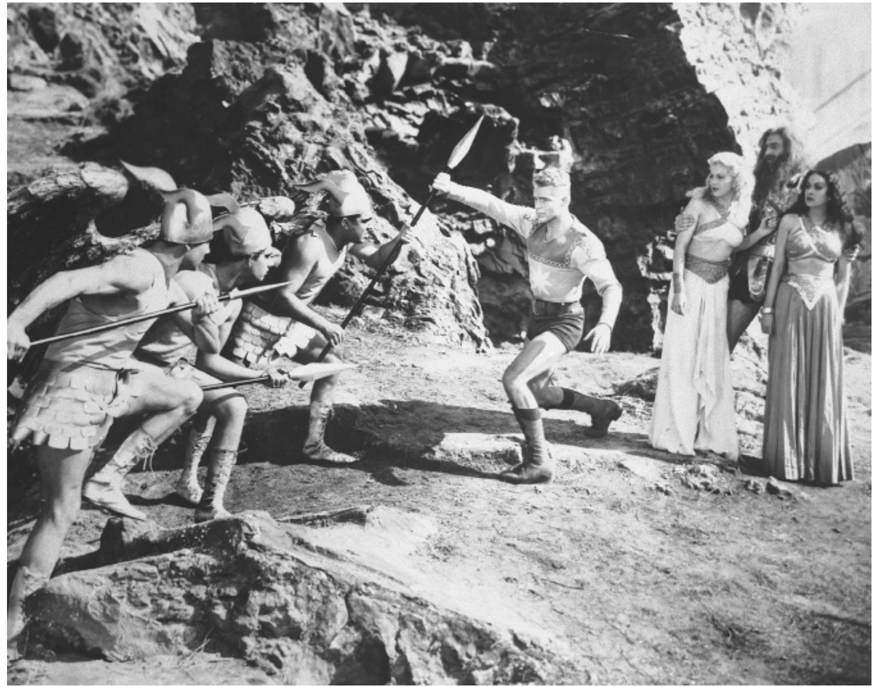
The motion pictures' popularity with young people drew the attention of social reformers and religious leaders in the United States and Great Britain. They feared that the movies glorified immoral behavior—such as criminal activity and illicit love affairs—and influenced children to forgo more wholesome recreational activities. Concerns about children spurred calls for censorship in the early 1900s, resulting in the formation of

Cast members of the *Our Gang* series go for a walk. Harold ("Hal") Roach produced this series of short comedies starting in 1922 and continuing until 1938, when he sold the series to MGM. Production of the comedies continued until 1944. The films, later syndicated for television as *The Little Rascals*, broke new ground with their naturalistic portrayals of children and integrated cast of white and African American characters. However, many critics charge that the films perpetuated the "pickaninny" stereotype of black children by depicting them as simple-minded, raggedy buffoons who spoke in exaggerated dialect.

SOURCE: © John Springer Collection/CORBIS; used with permission.

city and state movie censorship boards. By the late 1920s, civic groups, women's associations, and religious groups increasingly called for federal censorship of the motion pictures. In response, the American motion picture industry agreed to regulate the content of the movies on its own with a voluntary production code (commonly known as the Hays Code).

Concerns about the influence of the movies on children also prompted social science research, most notably a 12-volume series entitled *Motion Pictures and Youth* (commonly known as the Payne Fund Studies), published in 1933. Among the findings of these studies were that school-age children attended the movies more frequently than adults—on average once a week—and that the movies significantly influenced play activities, grooming and dress styles, and courting behaviors of young people.



Flash Gordon, played by Buster Crabbe, fighting off the enemy in a scene from the 1938 science fiction serial *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars*. This fifteen-episode film serial was one of three that were based on the comic strip *Flash Gordon*.

SOURCE: © Underwood & Underwood/CORBIS.

MATINEES AND FAMILY FILMS

Children's matinees continued to be a mainstay for movie theaters in the 1930s and 1940s. Standard matinee fare included cheaply made Westerns that garnered a loyal child audience. Some of children's favorite cowboy stars from this era included Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, and Roy Rogers. Serial movies were also important to theater managers because their uncomplicated plots and cliff-hanger endings drew children week after week in anticipation of the next installment. One of the most memorable serials of the 1930s was *Flash Gordon* (1936), detailing the fantastic adventures of a space hero. The *Our Gang* series was a long-lasting matinee regular that featured a ragtag group of lovable urchins. Cartoons by the animator Walt Disney became regular additions to the matinee lineup after his *Steamboat Willie* (1928) launched an international craze its star, Mickey Mouse. The popularity of Disney cartoon shorts peaked in the 1930s, when Mickey Mouse Clubs (sponsored by the Disney company) sprouted at theaters across the United States and Great Britain. By the late 1930s, Disney found a rival in the Warner Brothers studio. Over the next two decades, Warner Brothers' *Looney Tunes* introduced a cast of memorable characters that included Porky Pig, Bugs Bunny, and Daffy Duck. Although the Warner Brothers cartoons were written with adults in mind, they found an appreciative audience at the children's matinees.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the decline in movie attendance prompted the development of a new genre known as "the family film." American movie studios, in their attempt to lure larger audiences to full-price showings, created more films designed to appeal to both children and their parents. (In addition, family-oriented content also fell easily within the dictates of the Hayes Code). The success of the family films, especially those starring child stars Shirley Temple and Deanna Durbin, have been credited for saving several studios from financial ruin. Many popular family films of the era were based on children's literature, such as *David Copperfield* (1935) and *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). In 1937, *Snow*

White premiered as Disney's first full-length animated feature and became one of the top-grossing films of the decade, establishing Disney as the preeminent family film studio.

In other countries, particularly in Europe, a different genre of children's films developed. Countries such as the Soviet Union set up studios specifically to produce films conceived solely for children's viewing. These movies were told from the perspective of the child and were cast with ordinary-looking child actors who reflected the lives of the children who watched them. Frequently subsidized by the government, studios generally had much lower revenue expectations for these films and had budgets that were a fraction of what Hollywood movies spent (as reflected in the generally low production quality). Although a few of these films reached the attention of the American movie audience, such as French director Albert Lamorisse's *The Red Balloon* (1956), most were intended for children's viewing only within their country of origin. The tradition of this genre of children's cinema continues in many countries around the world, including the Netherlands, Iran, and Denmark.

THE RISE OF THE YOUTH MARKET

During the 1950s, the leisure habits of American families shifted, as much of the middle class moved into the suburbs, and television found a place in many homes. With new forms of recreation and greater distances between households and movie theaters, fewer Americans were going to the movies. Hollywood began to court teenagers who had the leisure, disposable income, and inclination to seek entertainment outside of the home. The emergence of teenagers as the primary target market for motion pictures is evident in the proliferation of "teenpics" during this decade, including movies about adolescent rebellion such as *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), rock and roll musicals such as *Jailhouse Rock* (1957), horror flicks and sci-fi thrillers such as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957) and *The Blob* (1958), and the "beach films" of the early 1960s, for example, *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1963).

Studios also continued to make family films in an effort to reverse a decline in movie attendance. Successful family films included expensive musical productions, such as *Doctor Doolittle* (1967) and *Mary Poppins* (1964). Disney continued its successful run of animated features in the 1950s and 1960s, including *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), and also produced a series of live-action features showcasing child-star Hayley Mills, including *The Parent Trap* (1964) and *That Darn Cat* (1965).

BOX OFFICE POWER

Escapist, nostalgic films such as *Star Wars* (1977), *Superman* (1978), and *Grease* (1978) were among the largest box office draws in the 1970s, and young people were among their most enthusiastic fans. The child audience was particularly crucial to the success of *Star Wars;* the film had been financed in part through the licensing of *Star Wars* toys and merchandise (a practice that is now commonplace). Movies for families and children continued to be successful revenue generators for Hollywood in the 1980s, with such blockbusters as *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial* (1982), which grossed $228 million in the year it was released. Disney, after a slump in the 1970s and early 1980s, returned to economic prosperity in 1989 with *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* and *The Little Mermaid*. Teenpics also flourished in the 1980s with hits such as *The Karate Kid* (1983), *Risky Business* (1986), and a number of films by director John Hughes, including *Sixteen Candles* (1984) and *The Breakfast Club* (1985).

Although the overall number of moviegoers continues to decline, movie studios have found stable sources of revenue in child and teen audiences. In Japan, family films by the acclaimed animator Hayao Miyazaki consistently break box office records, including *Princess Mononoke* (1997), *Spirited Away* (2001), and *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004). Hollywood has also banked on a resurgence of the family film with the success of movies such as *Home Alone* (1990), *The Lion King* (1994), *Shrek* (2001), and *Finding Nemo* (2003)—all of which rank in the top 30 highest-grossing U.S. films. Teenage boys have long been a driving factor in the development of movies, and evidence of their primacy as an audience can be seen in the steady stream of action, horror, and sex comedy films. However, the enormous box office take from the 1997 film *Titanic* (the highest-grossing film ever) demonstrated to studio executives the power of adolescent girls, who went to see the movie in droves. As a result, the early 2000s have seen an increase in the number of films marketed for girls, such as *Bring It On* (2000) and *The Princess Diaries* (2001). Another recent trend has been studios making movies based on existing children's television programs or video games (generally ones owned by a parent media company), such as The *Rugrats Movie*

(1998), *The Lizzie McGuire Movie* (2003), and a string of movies based on the *Pokémon* games and television series.

—Meredith Li-Vollmer

See also Cartoons, History of; Disney; Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Regulation, Movies

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MOVIES, PERCEIVED REALISM OF

Perceived realism refers to the extent to which audiences perceive mediated content to be realistic. Certain components of movies, such as the situations, characters, and settings, as well as children's expectations of reality can all affect assessments of realism. Researchers measure perceptions of realism by asking participants various questions about the level of general realism, the realism of emotions portrayed, the realism of actions, and the realism of demographics in mediated content.

During their development, children and adolescents use different strategies to evaluate the level of realism in movies. It is generally understood that children consider mediated content to be more realistic than do adults. Differences in perceptions of realism are important because content that is thought to be more realistic has been found to have greater effects on viewers, both negative and positive.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S REALISM PERCEPTIONS

Due to lack of experience and developmental factors, children's perceptions of reality differ from those of adults. Both the type of content that is being assessed and children's ages can influence their impressions of the realism in movies and television programs.

When questioned by researchers, children discuss the realism of mediated content in terms of characters and actions, and they think that characters' feelings are more realistic than their actions. Moreover, children's ideas about realism are multidimensional. Hawkins found that children's evaluations of media realism depend on the degree to which they think that content directly reflects reality (i.e., is a "magic window" to the world) and on how well mediated content matches their social expectations. Furthermore, although children's tendency to believe that what is portrayed is actually happening decreases with age, their assumption that portrayed situations resemble life situations does not necessarily decrease with age.

Some content is thought to be equally realistic by children of various ages. However, Morison, Kelly, and Gardner found that even though children of different ages may not differ in their overall assessments of realism, they use different processes to make these judgments. The criteria for realness evolve during different stages in children's development. Young children use content-specific cues (e.g., the presence of flying people) to explain why certain content is not possible and thus not realistic. As they get older, children recognize formal features (e.g., the use of puppets, music, animation, etc.) and use these features to assess realness; that is, children develop an awareness of movie and television production, which makes it possible for them to identify content that was produced using special effects, makeup, and other devices. For example, Morison and colleagues found that by the age of 7 or 8, children understand that certain formats, such as cartoons, are not real and that some of the situations portrayed in the media are not possible. Also, by the age of 5 or 6, children begin to be able to compare mediated content with their own experiences and perceptions of reality. However, according to Dorr, they usually do not use these comparisons to make judgments about realism until they get older.

By adolescence, children begin using different strategies to determine realism. They often contemplate the probability that what is presented will occur in real life. Nevertheless, even content that children

can identify as unrealistic may affect their emotive reactions. For example, although scary portrayals that feature monsters or other supernatural beings are often perceived to be unrealistic, they still elicit fear.

THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVING MEDIATED CONTENT AS REALISTIC

Perceived realism is important to the study of media effects because it has been found to influence the relationship between media exposure and media effects. In one study, those who thought that mediated content was realistic were generally more susceptible to influence, or at least more likely to use content to make judgments. In other words, content that is regarded as being realistic is more likely to affect attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors than is content that is thought to be unrealistic.

Perceived realism may be particularly influential in the creation of cultivation effects. When making judgments about the world, people are generally more likely to use situations and characters that are considered to be real to make those decisions. For example, people who watch a lot of television and who think that the content they watch accurately portrays reality are more likely to think that crime is very prevalent in society because they can easily think of televised examples of crime. Perceptions of realism may thus make media examples more accessible. As a result, those who believe that content is realistic may be more likely to make false assumptions about their social world based on media depictions.

Furthermore, Hawkins found that content that is thought to be realistic produces greater antisocial effects than content that is thought to be unrealistic or based in fantasy. Various studies showed that people who perceive certain content to be realistic have been found to make harsher judgments about the mentally handicapped, to believe that more peers are sexually active, and to act aggressively. Furthermore, realistic depictions of violence tend to cause more fear than stylistic or animated portrayals. Of course, the mediating effects of perceived realism are not always negative. For instance, Reeves found that children who judged television content to be realistic increased their pro-social behavior and decreased antisocial behavior. Consequently, although research suggests that perceived realism can be associated with harmful outcomes, the ways in which it can be used for positive influence is deserving of greater research attention.

—K. Maja Krakowiak

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Cultivation Theory; Fantasy–Reality Distinction; Fear Reactions; Formal Features; Sex in Television, Perceived Realism of

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MOVIES, RATING SYSTEMS AND

Ratings systems refer to symbols that indicate the age appropriateness of media content. Ratings have been used as systems of self-regulation, intended to respond to viewers' concerns and forestall threats of government regulation. The U.S. movie industry has had content advisory codes since the 1920s; however, the ratings system we know today was developed in

1968 by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and the National Association of Theater Owners (NATO). This system's significance lies in its influence over other media ratings.

Movie studios are not legally required to submit their films for a rating, so the system's success depends on voluntary participation. Finding theaters for unrated films, however, is difficult when theater owners enforce the age restrictions of the MPAA ratings. A Federal Trade Commission investigation of movie marketing indicated increasing enforcement rates by a majority of U.S. movie theaters. A similar situation exists in the home video industry, where a majority of members of the Video Software Dealers Association (including video store chains such as Blockbuster) have policies that restrict children's access to videos based on MPAA ratings. Those codes are also printed on the video and its case. The presumption of both theater owners and video retailers is that unrated movies are to be treated as age inappropriate. Historically, moviegoing audiences have been reluctant to attend unrated movies, although no data are available to indicate that the same is true in the home video market.

The process of rating movies is supervised by the MPAA, which begins by assembling a panel of 8 to 13 people who will screen and rate films. Panel members must be experienced parents, "possessed of an intelligent maturity," and capable of putting themselves in the role of most American parents. They are full-time employees of the Classification and Rating Administration, an independent agency set up to insulate them from industry pressure. Panel members serve terms of varying lengths, requiring the recruitment of new members on a regular basis. Panel members screen the movie using a variety of criteria, including the film's depiction of violence, language, nudity, sensuality, and drug abuse. Panel members are directed to consider the mix of such elements within the context of the film. After screening, panel members consider which rating most parents would consider appropriate and then discuss their initial judgments. In the end, a majority vote determines the film's rating. Each member completes a written form with his or her vote and the reasons for assigning that rating. The MPAA then notifies the studio and announces the film's rating.

In most cases, movie studios can accurately predict a film's rating. It is the studio's intent to maximize box office revenues, which means achieving a rating that will guarantee as wide an audience as possible. Hence, the lowest rating (appropriate for young children) and the highest ratings (where children under 17 are restricted) are viewed as compromising a film's profit potential. If a film receives a rating that compromises its marketing plans, there are two options. First, the studio may request to see the reasons the film received its rating and then re-edit the film to achieve a different rating. The second option is to appeal the rating to the Rating Appeals Board, a 14-member panel of MPAA and NATO representatives that serves as the final authority. After screening the film and hearing from both the studio and the chair of the rating board, the appeals board votes. A two-thirds vote is required to overturn the original rating.

MEANINGS OF THE RATINGS

The MPAA uses five ratings, each of which indicates the age level for which the film is appropriate. The lowest rating is G (General Audiences—All Ages Admitted). According to the MPAA, this rating indicates that the film contains nothing that parents would object to their young children seeing. This does not mean the movie is a children's film, however, nor does it mean that it is free of violence or disrespectful language.

The second rating level is PG (Parental Guidance Suggested; Some Material May Not Be Suitable For Children). This indicates that the film may contain some profanity, violence, or nudity, but not at levels that the Ratings Board feels should merit a strong caution. This separates a PG movie from PG-13 (Parents Strongly Cautioned; Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13). This rating was created in 1984 to indicate more severe levels of violent content, profanity, or nudity, which parents might not feel appropriate for young children. Any film depicting drug use or including even a single use of sexually derived profanity requires at least a PG-13 rating.

The two highest rating levels indicate attendance restrictions for minors. The R rating (Restricted, Under 17 Requires Accompanying Parent or Adult Guardian) indicates the film contains adult material (including hard profanity, rough violence, sexual-oriented nudity, or drug abuse). Theaters are intended to enforce the adult-accompaniment restriction for R-rated films. They are also expected to bar all minors from seeing an NC-17 film (No One 17 and Under Admitted). Although it may not legally be termed obscene or pornographic, such a film would have strong sexual, violent, or aberrant behavior.

The ratings symbol displayed in movie advertisements includes wording indicating the type of objectionable content present (e.g., crude humor, mild violence, nudity, or sexual content). These content descriptors are intended to give parents more information

in advance of seeing the movie; however, some have criticized them for not providing enough information about the offending content. A second criticism of movie ratings comes from research with parents conducted by the National Institute on Media and the Family. Those researchers assembled their own panels of parent raters, who disagreed with the MPAA ratings on a number of films. An additional criticism, most recently leveled in the Federal Trade Commission's 2001 report *Marketing Violent Entertainment to Children*, is that movie theaters do not consistently enforce age restrictions. Hence, a significant portion of teens and children report viewing R-rated movies in theaters, as well as on premium cable television networks (e.g., HBO).

—Ron Warren

See also Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Parental Advisory Labels and Rating Systems; Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation; Regulation, Movies; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of

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MOVIES, ROMANTIC LOVE IN

The concept of romance has been defined in different ways. It applies to such notions as a brief love affair, an intense and enduring bond based on mutual feelings of love, a sudden flare-up of romantic passion, and a strong amorous fascination of one person for another. Many of these and other dimensions of romantic love have occurred as a dominant or central idea of legends and tales in most cultures. Telling and retelling stories on the subject of romance is regarded as part of the socialization process of family values and sex roles. Through romantic tales, diverse moral propositions on love and relationships are propagated. The perils of romantic relationships that do not comply with customary norms or may disrupt established social ties, for instance, are illustrated by stories in which the lovers are left damaged or disappointed. Media portrayals of romance can affect viewers' attitude toward romantic relationships, and some research has described the responses of children and adolescents in this regard.

In their storytelling practices, 20th-century media industries have always been keen to take up the theme of romantic love. Romantic movie couples—Ilsa and Rick in *Casablanca*, Rose and Jack in *Titanic*, Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler in *Gone With the Wind*, and Vivian and Edward in *Pretty Woman*—are evidence of the legendary and sometimes iconic position of romance in popular culture. A number of analyses into the status of romantic portrayals in mass media cultures have described the romantic theme as dominant and ubiquitous. Bachen and Illouz speak of an obsession in our culture for stories about romantic love and call film and advertising the privileged discourse of sexual and romantic desire. Romantic portrayals in movies are described as a textbook example of how the figural dominates in a postmodern culture. Bachen and Illouz point out that compared to the verbal narratives of the past, the present-day visually vivid and lifelike imagery of romance is more likely to evoke mechanisms of identification and to elicit sexual affect, fantasy, and daydreaming.

Romantic representations are rarely discussed from an academic viewpoint, however. Certain studies have examined the nature of romantic portrayals in movies, describing, for instance, how the principal theme of romantic movies has changed over time. Whereas characters in movies from the 1930s typically were torn between a marriage for money or a marriage out of love, in the 1950s and 1960s, the principal theme of romantic movies had become sexual attraction and an idealized vision of bachelorhood, termed "the playboy fantasy." Movies from the 1970s and 1980s were characterized by an ambiguous visualization of a desire for authentic romance, on the one hand, and a cynical attitude toward romantic love, on the other.

Some of the contemporary movie stereotypes about romantic relationships have been identified as love at first sight, lovers are predestined for each other, and perfect partners understand each other's needs, also occurred in an analysis of Disney feature-length films. Tanner and her colleagues found that romantic relationships in Disney films often are created by love at first sight and tend to be idealized as easy to maintain. Pardun explored the romantic content of movies that attracted a considerable proportion of the teenage audience in 1995, reaching somewhat different

conclusions. In general, her analysis revealed that direct references to sexual content are rare in romantic scenes. The bifurcation between love and sex in teenage movies, already described by film analysts, appears to be confirmed empirically in this study. Furthermore, Pardun made a distinction between various themes in romantic imagery, leading to different conclusions about romantic content in movies. The detection of categories as "romantic friction" and "negative romance," for example, leads to the conclusion that a rather negative image of romance is depicted. While movies often emphasize the difficulties of interpersonal communication, love declarations appear to be relatively uncommon. Second, Pardun documented that most romantic scenes involving married characters could be described as "monotonous monogamy," suggesting an unexciting picture of married life. Finally, almost half of the romantic scenes in the study featured what was termed *nonprogressive romance*; this category classified behaviors such as kissing, dancing, and flirtation, when no signs are displayed that these actions would continue on a physical or sexual level. The magnitude of this category, and Pardun's additional finding that these nonprogressive scenes more or less exclusively feature young characters, indicate that preintercourse behaviors are depicted as quite normal for teenagers in movies.

Some of these analyses have inspired a critical attitude toward the idealized description of romance in popular media. For that reason, a handful of studies have explored whether portrayals of romance may produce unrealistic expectations and illusions. Segrin and Nabi, for example, have shown that adults who watch television programs that contain many references to romantic relationships hold more idealized beliefs about marriage. According to Haferkamp, heavy viewers expect that romantic partners must empathize perfectly with each other and read each other's thoughts if their relationship is to stand and succeed. Based on interviews with 8-to-17-year-olds, Bachen and Illouz described a gradual conversion from children's imagined vision of romance shaped by the media, to a tension between the romantic ideals as imposed by the media and adolescents' emergent awareness of how the dating arena is organized.

—Steven Eggermont

See also Adolescents, Movie Portrayals of; Contraceptive Information, Television and; Disney; Movies, Sexuality in; Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's

Romantic love has occurred as a central idea of legends and tales in most cultures, and portrayals of romantic relationships that do not comply with customary norms can be a source of moral propositions about love and relationships. Adolescents' romantic development often creates great tension in adults as well as in teens themselves. In the movie *Tea and Sympathy* (1956), a 17-year-old boy who does not emulate his peers' desire for girls is suspected of being homosexual, until an older woman gently seduces him in an effort to confirm his heterosexuality. Her indiscretion destroys her marriage, but the film suggests that her sacrifice saved him from a life of torment, thus preserving patriarchal priorities and alleviating adolescent anguish. Teenage romance has offered diverse fodder for movie drama, from the playful promiscuity of *Love Finds Andy Hardy* (1938) to the fatal angst of *Ode to Billy Joe* (1976) and the maudlin tribulation of *A Walk to Remember* (2002).

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MOVIES, SEXUALITY IN

Sexual allusions, depictions, and story lines are an everyday ingredient of popular movies in the United States and in Europe. Teenagers are very likely to be a exposed to these messages for several reasons. Adolescents have been identified as a key segment of the movie audience. Asked about their recent visits to a movie theater, one teenager in five reported going to the movies two or three times a month. Roberts indicated that teenagers prefer to go to the movies in the company of peers and unaccompanied by an adult. Furthermore, the Motion Picture Association of America found that 58% of all movies made from 1968 to 2003 fell in the category R (Restricted). In 2003, 20% of the top-grossing films were R-rated. Most young viewers in Greenberg et al.'s study reported that they had viewed at least one R-rated movie before they reached the required age. A survey into the industry's practices revealed that 81% of the mystery shoppers who were younger than 17 were able to buy an R-rated movie on DVD.

The few studies that have analyzed how sexual messages are presented in movies demonstrated a high rate of recurrence of sexually oriented content. In 1993, Greenberg and his colleagues examined 16 R-rated movies known for their appeal to young viewers; these movies were rated restricted by reason of their sexual content. Overall, these movies contained 10.8 sexual acts per hour, or 17.5 coded sexual behaviors per movie. Bufkin and Eschholz found that 60% of the top movies in 1996 included at least one sex scene. About half of these movies were rated PG or PG-13. Kunkel and his colleagues showed that televised movies are the TV genre with the greatest likelihood of presenting overt sexual behavior. Compared to other types of television programs, movies show a much higher frequency of sexual content in prime time.

These and other analyses also revealed trends in the explicitness with which sexual activity is presented and the typical context in which it is portrayed. Studies have documented a rising level of explicitness. Abramson and Mechanic concluded that the most popular movies of 1959, 1969, and 1979 dealt with comparable sexual themes, emphasizing physical gratification rather than affection; the authors also found, however, that more and more explicit dialogues and imagery were used.

A number of studies observed no or few allusions to contraception in movies and highlighted the predominance of extramarital sexual acts. Greenberg and colleagues categorized 46% of the sexually oriented scenes in a sample of R-rated movies as "sexual intercourse between unmarried partners." With a ratio of 32:1, unmarried intercourse occurred much more frequently than intercourse between married partners. Dempsey and Reychert's analysis of popular videotape rentals showed that 85% of the sex-related scenes occurred among unmarried couples. Unmarried characters' sexual behaviors also tend to be depicted more explicitly: Where passionate kissing was the most common sexual activity among married couples, a considerable proportion of the sexual scenes with unmarried partners contained what was labeled as "implied intercourse."

As a general rule, conclusions about the sexual content of movies appear to correspond to conclusions about most other types of media content: With the characters involved in sexual scenes being typically young, unmarried, and favorable toward sexual behaviors, an alluring, glamorous, uncomplicated, and thoughtless image of sexual activity is presented. There is one difference, however; movies are more likely to display this image in an unashamed and explicit manner.

—Steven Eggermont

See also Contraceptive Information, Television and; Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Movies, Rating Systems and; Sex, Media Impact on; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of

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MOVIES, SUBSTANCE USE IN

An assortment of social factors, such as peers, families, and living situations, have been identified as influential in adolescents' decision making about and attitudes toward substance use. In addition, among other media, movies have been recognized as significant sources of information about substance use that can influence young people's beliefs and expectations. Attending the movies remains one of the most popular pastimes for American teenagers, and watching movies at home on DVD, video, or by other means is becoming ever more commonplace. Especially because media portrayals of substance use seldom include negative consequences of tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, the effect of these portrayals on young people is both a concern for parents and a public health issue.

SMOKING IN THE MOVIES

Studies focusing exclusively on tobacco use have found that most films, both currently and historically, contain at least one instance of cigarette smoking, with R-rated films most likely to include instances of smoking. Generally speaking, smokers in films are male adults who are motivated to smoke when they are agitated, sad, happy, or relaxed. Whereas some scholars have found that characters shown smoking are depicted as having higher socioeconomic status and increased romantic and sexual activity (thus potentially serving as attractive models), others have not found such associations. Evident consequences for tobacco use are exceptionally rare in movies.

In terms of depictions of youth smoking, a study examining 200 of the most popular movie rentals from 1996 to 1997 found that 17% of youth characters (18 and under) smoked and that girls were slightly more likely to do so. More recently, research investigating the top-selling films featuring teenagers from 1999, 2000, and 2001 found that one sixth of the major teen characters were shown smoking cigarettes.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THE MOVIES

Depictions of alcohol use in films have received less attention than tobacco representations, although studies analyzing drinking on television are more frequent. In one late 1990s analysis of films, researchers found four out of five films showed at least one major character drinking. Movie drinkers tended to be adults and to have a higher socioeconomic status, to be more attractive and romantic/sexual, and to be more aggressive than nondrinkers. The negative consequences of alcohol consumption are not commonly shown, although one tenth of the most popular movie rentals from 1996 to 1997 did contain an anti-alcohol message. This study also found that 22% of characters who appeared to be under the age of 18 drank, with 40% of them experiencing consequences as a result of their alcohol consumption. Two fifths of the teen characters

in the most successful teen-centered films from 1999 to 2001 were shown drinking, although they were unlikely to suffer any negative consequences in either the short or long term.

DRUG USE IN MOVIES

Portrayals of illicit drug use, although frequently commented on in the popular press, have received little systematic scrutiny from the social science community. In one of the only studies to attend to drug use, in 1999, Don Roberts and his colleagues found that about one fifth of the 200 popular movies they analyzed portrayed illicit drug use, and only half of these portrayed any consequences. Eight percent of characters under the age of 18 in Roberts's study were shown using illicit drugs. Susannah Stern's analysis of teen characters in 1999–2001 films documented that one seventh of teen characters used drugs. Notably, this study also found that teen characters were rarely shown refusing an offer to do drugs or regretting any of their substance use behaviors. In 2001, Thompson and Yokota found no illicit drug usage in their study of animated, G-rated films, although they noted that three films showed characters consuming a substance that transfigured them, and two films showed characters injected with a drug.

CONSEQUENCES OF SUBSTANCE USE IMAGERY

Altogether, research indicates that movies commonly provide images of substance use, both by adults and teenagers. Such imagery can be a concern, especially given the dearth of depictions demonstrating the negative consequences that often follow substance use. Equally notable is the apparent message in many films, especially those targeting young people, that substance use is a normal and fun teen behavior. This trend may play some role in findings that many teens view drinking and smoking (and, to a lesser extent, drug use) as acceptable youth behaviors. Moreover, despite their awareness of the risks involved, many young people regard substance use as "cool" and fashionable. A study by the Institute for Adolescent Risk Communication in 2002, for instance, found that young people (ages 14 to 22) are more likely to associate smoking cigarettes or pot and drinking alcohol with "popular" peers, rather than "unpopular" peers. A quarter of high school students believe that people who smoke pot are more interesting and more independent people. Such associations between substance use and being popular, autonomous, or unique may help to explain the enduring appeal of substance use among American youth.

Indeed, despite myriad public health campaigns and school- and community-based education programs, substance use among American young people continues to be widespread. Recent studies reveal, for example, that most teens have tried smoking, drinking, and using marijuana, and a smaller yet sizable group of young people partake of these substances on a fairly regular basis. Although some young people use substances with relatively little consequence, many others are less fortunate. Indeed, statistics detailing the number of young people who suffer the costs of substance abuse (such as fatalities from automobile accidents, drug overdose, and chronic illnesses such as lung cancer) are distressing.

The role the movies ultimately play in actual substance use among children and teenagers continues to be studied. In the meantime, many activist and children's rights groups continue to appeal to the film industry to present more socially responsible images of substance use in their narratives, and many have begun to pressure the Motion Picture Association of America to use the rating system to limit young people's access to substance use imagery in the movies (i.e., by giving any films that show cigarette smoking an automatic rating of R or higher). In additionally, more cross-sectional and longitudinal studies are being undertaken to better understand how movies may be affecting young people's attitudes and behaviors; initial work suggests that the media do play a role.

—Susannah R. Stern

See also Cigarette Use in Television and Movies; Drug Use, Depictions of; Public Health Campaigns

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MOVIES, VIOLENCE IN

Children and adolescents' exposure to movie violence has long been an area of concern for parents, researchers, and health professionals. Indeed, violence appears to be a common theme in movies (and movie promos) frequently viewed by children and adolescents. Research findings in this area are cause for concern, especially in light of the vast research suggesting that children and adolescents' exposure to violent images can lead to fear, aggression, and desensitization.

In fact, these concerns, dating back to film's introduction to society, prompted the Payne Fund Studies, a series of research studies conducted in the late 1920s and early 1930s in which movies and their harmful effects on children were examined. Although this study provided early evidence of violent films' negative impact on children's behavior and attitudes, its findings should be interpreted with caution due to methodological flaws of the research design (e.g., problems in sampling, measurement shortcomings). Regardless, this milestone study has helped set the stage for more recent studies of violent movies and their effects.

DEFINITIONS AND DEBATES

Like the existing research on television violence, most investigations of movie violence draw on either George Gerbner's definition of violence (i.e., physical force, with or without weapon, against self or other) or the National Television Violence Study's definition of violence (i.e., a threat or use of physical force intended to harm one or more animate beings). More inclusive definitions of violence have been advanced; for example, Bradley Greenberg's definition includes verbal aggression.

At the core of the debate over definitions of violence is the fact that not all acts of violence are equal. For example, the brutality of the Holocaust depicted in *Schindler's List* (a film frequently screened in high school classrooms for its educational merit) is quite distinct from the blood and gore found in the *Scream* trilogy (a series of films popular among teenagers for their entertainment and shock value). What about violence found in films viewed by young children? An example can be seen in *The Lion King,* when Mufasa is murdered by Uncle Scar while Mufasa's son Simba watches. Clearly, not all violence is equal in its severity, graphicness, and realism; yet, what the research shows is that there is a high level of violence in movies viewed by young people.

VIOLENT CONTENT

Several content analyses have been conducted to investigate the presence of violence in film. These studies vary in terms of the film genre, the film's target audience, and the contextual features coded (e.g., weapons, gender of perpetrator and victim, etc.). Yet, these studies share a common objective of documenting the quantity and type of violence in movies.

Violence in G- and PG-Rated Films

G-rated films, popular among children, are not as violence free as their rating would suggest. Fumie Yokota and Kimberly Thompson conducted a content analysis of 74 G-rated animated films (released between 1937 and 1999) to quantify portrayals of violence. They found that all 74 films contained at least one act of violence, with the average film containing 9.5 minutes of violence. In most incidents of violence, only the body was used as a weapon; however, swords, knives, and guns were also featured. Moreover, a majority of violence occurred when good or neutral characters were feuding with bad characters to resolve conflicts. Indeed, this message to children—that violence is an appropriate means to solve problems—is cause for concern.

Like G-rated films, PG-rated films are popular among children and young people. Andrew Pelletier and colleagues conducted a content analysis of the 50 top-grossing G- or PG-rated live action films released between 1995 and 1997 to examine firearm use (an indicator of violence, no doubt). The authors found that 40% of the films showed at least one major character carrying a firearm. Of those characters handling a gun, 50% made a threatening gesture, and 19% fired a gun. The authors conclude that firearms are frequently shown in films likely to be seen by children.

Violence in "Slasher" Films

Research on "slasher" films is also noteworthy, given the popularity of this film genre among teens and preteens. Commonly rated PG-13, these films feature suspense-evoking scenes in which an antagonist (usually a male) attacks one or more victims. Recent slasher films known for their graphic portrayal of violence include *I Know What You Did Last Summer* and *Scream.*

A small number of published studies exist on the presence of violence in slasher films. For instance, Fred Molitor and Barry Sapolsky analyzed 30 slasher films released in 1980, 1985, and 1989, finding that heavier amounts of violence appeared in films released in 1989 than those in the earlier years. A follow-up study by Barry Sapolsky, Fred Molitor, and Sarah Luque found that popular slasher films of the 1990s feature more violence than slasher films of the 1980s. Such a finding begs the question of whether rates of violence in today's slasher films have continued to rise.

Violence and Aggression in Movie Previews

The study of violence in movie previews has been an important extension of the research on movie violence. Movie previews are important determinants of viewers' film selections and are perceived to be precursors to the full-length film. A study by Mary Beth Oliver and Sriram Kalyanaraman examined violence in 107 movie previews featured on video rentals; findings indicated that 75% of the previews contained at least one act of aggression and nearly 46% contained at least one gun scene. It is important to note that more than two thirds of the previews for G-, PG-, and PG-13-rated films featured at least one violent scene. Such evidence suggests that movie previews consistently feature materials that may be inappropriate for younger audiences.

CONCLUSION

Several noteworthy conclusions can be drawn from research on this body of literature. Parents and caregivers should preview films or use online resources to judge appropriateness of films for their children. Co-viewing may be particularly important with G-rated animated films because parents cannot necessarily rely on the Motion Picture Association of America's (MPAA) rating system for information on violent content. Furthermore, given the research indicating portrayals of violence in G- and PG-rated movies, it is perhaps due time that the MPAA give serious consideration to replacing or supplementing the current age-based rating system with one based on content descriptors.

—Angela Paradise

See also Aggression, Movies and; Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; V-Chip (Violence Chip); Violence, Desensitization Toward; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Experimental Studies of; Violence, Extent of and Responses to; Violence, Historical Trends and

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MOVIE VIEWING, ADOLESCENTS'

From John Travolta's *Saturday Night Fever* and Molly Ringwald's *Breakfast Club* to Lindsey Lohan's *Mean Girls,* movies—despite their differences in genre—continuously receive accolades from adolescents. The reasons movies are so popular among adolescents have to do with the imagination and new sensations that movies bring to teens. Whereas adolescents make up only 16% of the U.S. population, they accounted for 28% of all movie admissions in 2004, according to annual movie admission records. Adolescents have consistently demonstrated high interest in movies. Among those teen moviegoers, 88% saw between 2 and 12 movies a year, and 54% of them were frequent moviegoers who watched movies at least once per month. For example, more than half of 15-to-16-year-olds had seen the majority of popular R-rated movies.

Research has found that media play a significant role in adolescent development, particularly in terms of identity development. Media portrayals of substance use also influence young viewers, and both parents and policymakers have urged that movie content be continuously and carefully scrutinized and adolescents' viewing habits be actively and closely monitored.

Movie watching seems to be considered a group activity among adolescents. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, only 15% of 7th to 12th graders said they were alone when watching movies, whereas 74% of them said that they were with someone else, most often with friends, followed by siblings and parents. Among families with teenagers ages 12 to 17, 35% of the families reported going to the movies at least once per month, and only 17% of them never went to the movies. Adolescents have different preferences as to favorite types of movies. Of the 7th to 12th graders surveyed, 42% listed action movies as among their favorite choices, followed by comedy (38%), horror (25%), family films (22%), and romance (16%).

Movie watching is no longer confined to movie theaters owing to a higher access to movie rentals, movie channels on TV, and movie downloads and DVD rentals from the Internet. High concentrations of video rentals and retail outlets in many communities influence households' movie-watching and -buying habits. Of youths ages 9 to 17, 62% said that they watched at least one video a week. Video rentals boost audiences' active viewing experience in that individuals pay more attention to movie rentals than to television viewing. In addition, when adolescents are at home, they most often spend time watching TV or movies alone in their bedrooms. Because 97% of families own a VCR and consume more than eight new videos a year, adolescents' exposure to movies has dramatically increased.

Adolescents actively use media for entertainment, identity formation, high sensation, coping, and youth culture identification. Youth generally regard parents and peers as the most important sources of information, followed by movies and other mass media outlets. An increasing number of studies have investigated the effects of movies on adolescents' development. Especially because mass media are popular and easily accessible, they play an important role in adolescent socialization and identity exploration. Movies are a source of information about gender identity, relationships, and romantic experience. The need for identity formation is particularly crucial because adolescents gradually distance themselves from parents during this developmental stage. Mass media also provide adolescents with ideal images of physical and behavioral characteristics.

MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF SUBSTANCE USE

Adolescents' interpretation of mass media messages and their perception of media figures such as movie actors and actresses can affect them in other ways as well. For example, negative portrayals of health-related issues, such as tobacco and alcohol use in movies, particularly catch researchers' attention. Content analyses investigating the portrayals of tobacco and alcohol use in top-grossing films have found an increasing likelihood that adolescents will internalize the behaviors portrayed on the big screen. The presence of alcohol and tobacco use in movies is far more noticeable to adolescents than to adults because adolescents are intrigued by adultlike behaviors and are eager to emulate them.

One content analysis of the 25 top-grossing movies between 1988 and 1997 showed that 87% of the movies portrayed tobacco use. R-rated movies contained significantly more tobacco occurrences than did G, PG, and PG-13 movies, although even G-rated movies depicted tobacco usage to some degree. An analysis of films geared toward teens found rare portrayals of the negative consequences of smoking and drinking. In movies rated R and PG-13, two fifths of teen characters drank alcohol, and one sixth smoked cigarettes. Adult tobacco users portrayed in movies were likely to smoke when socializing, celebrating, and partying. Teens, however, were more likely to use tobacco when they were sad, rebellious, disobedient, or feeling the need to relax, look cool, or fit in with their peers.

Another content analysis, this of the top 10 films from 1985 to 1996, further showed that the majority of films supported both tobacco and alcohol use, while the hazards of smoking and drinking were rarely mentioned. Only one third of the films referred to negative consequences of substance use. In addition, comedies were more likely to portray positive alcohol consumption than were drama or action movies. Overall, the prevalence of tobacco and alcohol use was often portrayed by lead characters.

Depictions of teens' substance use in film could further strengthen adolescents' belief that such behaviors are common among peers in the real world. According to social learning theory and social cognitive theory, individuals acquire behaviors through a

series of vicarious observations and imitations. Social learning theory emphasizes the process by which individuals primarily learn from modeling the behaviors of others. In addition, social cognitive theory posits that individuals learn things from which rewarding consequences and experiences can be drawn. Positive expectancies of substance use can be primed through the influential figures portrayed by characters whom adolescents respect. For example, when other known factors such as family's and peers' smoking behaviors are controlled, research indicates that adolescents are more likely to take up smoking and have favorable attitudes toward smoking if their favorite stars do so. The depiction of tobacco usage in movies has also been positively associated with predicted favorable attitudes and susceptibility toward smoking among fifth to eighth graders.

The message interpretation process (MIP) model further postulates the importance of perceived desirability, similarity, identification, and expectancies of mass media messages that predict adolescents' behavior. Positive portrayals and appeals in movies can stimulate the desire to emulate the portrayed behavior, such as drinking or smoking. The influence of movie stars on adolescents' desire to smoke has been partially attributed to the actors' physical and emotional characteristics. For example, positive expectancies of smoking can be evoked if smokers are played by young attractive actors. Once adolescents perceive that teen characters in movies are similar to them, positive expectancies of substance use can be strengthened, and the chances of adolescents emulating the portrayed behavior will increase.

Health practitioners, parents, and professional movie associations, among others, have called for restrictions on adolescents' access and overexposure to movie portrayals of substance use. Protective factors can reduce adolescents' exposure to smoking in movies. Parents, for example, can actively monitor adolescents and restrict them from viewing R-rated movies having positive portrayals of tobacco and alcohol use. Some even propose radical changes—for example, that movies portraying tobacco use in a positive light without mentioning its negative consequences should be rated NC-17 rather than PG-13 or R. Others suggest media literacy programs as an alternative approach to helping young people develop critical thinking abilities that may limit the influence of smoking and drinking representations in movies.

—Yi-Chun Yvonnes Chen

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Adolescents, Movie Portrayals of; Alcohol Advertising, Effects of; Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Movies, Romantic Love in; Movies, Sexuality in; Movie Viewing, Children's

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MOVIE VIEWING, CHILDREN'S

Movies—the first mass media—have been a widely accepted form of family entertainment since the time of World War I. Almost half of all families with children under 12 attend the theater occasionally, while 26% attend frequently and 16% infrequently. Only 17% of families never attend movies in the theater. In general 9-to-11-year-olds go to the movies more frequently than either 6-to-8-year-olds or 12-to-14-year-olds. Current technology is significantly increasing children's access to a wide variety of movies, often in unsupervised settings, and marketers are expanding the target audience by producing videos for infants as young as 3 months.

Children's movies are often conceptualized as family movies and considered to be nonoffensive, wholesome, and entertaining. However, current research, including content analysis of television and movies, indicates that children are routinely exposed to a variety of poor role models, which then may influence decision making and behavior. Nevertheless, some movies for children are wholesome and nonoffensive, and they remain an important and profitable source of family entertainment.

Technological advances have brought movies into the home, ending theater control and significantly increasing availability of movies to children. Research indicates that children today spend more time sitting at home using media than playing outside, including viewing about 40 minutes of videos daily. With the introduction of the video recorder (VCR), followed by DVD players, and with the ability to download movies onto a computer, children's access to all types of movies is possible. In addition, beginning in the late 1990s, companies such as Baby Einstein and SoSmart began to produce developmental baby videos targeting infants as young as 3 months. To date, there seems to be little research on usage or potential effects of movie watching beginning at such a young age.

Based on the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) movie rating system currently in place, G-rated films are considered appropriate for children under the age of 8. They contain no sexual content, scenes involving drug use, offensive language, and minimal violence. G-rated movies are the most profitable for the industry, although far fewer are produced than R-rated films. Also included in the category of children's movies are those with a rating of PG, indicating that although these movies are considered appropriate for those children ages 8 to 13, parental guidance is suggested. PG movies may contain some profanity or violence, but no drug use or explicit sex.

Various studies indicate that the MPAA rating system is used and considered helpful by almost 70% of parents. It is important to note, however, that almost half of all parents set no rules for their children regarding what they watch on television. Of 2-to-7-year-olds, 32% have a television in their bedroom, and 16% have a VCR; for 8-to-18-year-olds, the numbers are 65% and 36%, respectively. It seems likely, therefore, that children's exposure to movies, often unsupervised, is increasing, thereby heightening concerns regarding the influence of movies in the lives of children.

Some scholars suggest that although the current movie rating system is helpful, it is not complete and is not informed by an understanding of child development. For example, younger children do not distinguish between fantasy and reality, do not understand beyond concrete information to abstract, and cannot put themselves in someone else's place to understand how they are feeling. Younger children are also less able to put together pieces of a story or to draw inferences from the narration than older children. These developmental issues are not considered within the current rating system.

Furthermore, studies suggest that children of all ages experience fright reactions to media and that these feelings have the potential to remain with the individual and influence behavior. Potential fright response is not addressed within the current rating system. Also of concern is the positive correlation indicated by research between movie watching and risky behavior, suggesting that behavior such as tobacco and alcohol use in movies should also be assessed in addition to drug use, which is currently considered when assigning a rating category.

In a recent study, Goldstein and colleagues investigated 50 G-rated animated Disney films and found that two thirds, including all seven films released in 1996–1997, depicted tobacco use by at least one character; one half depicted alcohol use. According to these authors, 13 of the animated movies released by Disney since 1992 portrayed tobacco use, with almost twice as many characters using tobacco classified as good.

—Rebecca Van de Vord

See also Movies, Perceived Realism of; Movies, Rating Systems and; Movies, Violence in; Movie Viewing, Adolescents'

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WEBSITES

Baby Einstein: http://www.babyeinstein.com
So Smart: http://www.sosmart.com/

MULTIMEDIA TOYS

In a general sense, *multimedia toy* is a name for digitally based interactive media that are marketed as toys for children. All types of "smart" toys—*smart* meaning that such a toy can react to what a child is doing or saying—can be considered multimedia toys, including such media as Sony's PlayStation and Nintendo's Game Boy. However, virtual pets are the best developed example of such toys.

A virtual pet is a more or less complex software program that can interact with a person (and so is able to control input and to produce output). This software program can be online or installed on a computer, or it may have its own physical form, for example, as an entertainment robot. The first type, pets that exist only on a personal computer or on the Internet, most often appears as little animals—a cool camel, a happy hamster, or a virtual dog that the user can adopt and care for. An example of the second type, a virtual pet with its own physical body, is the *tamagotchi.* This toy, first released in 1996, is a rather simple plastic egg with a little screen and some buttons. The story included with the product describes the egg as the living place of an alien for whom the owner must care. It needs symbolic food, sometimes medicine, companionship, and other kinds of attention. If the owner takes good care of the tamagotchi, it will communicate happiness and love; if not, it will become a very unpleasant being or even die.

Introduced in 1999, Sony's AIBO is a robot similar to a dog that was created primarily for entertainment. The word *aibou* means "friend" or "buddy" in Japanese, and *AIBO* is an acronym for Artificial Intelligence Robot. Combining robotic and media technology, the Sony AIBO could play music and take pictures as well as recognize spoken commands. Although Sony discontinued this product in early 2006, it continues to offer software support, and there are a number of websites for owners of the multimedia toy.

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Empirical studies in Germany showed that several months after the tamagotchi was launched, it could be found in 16% of German households that included boys between 6 and 17 and even in 28% of households with girls of the same age group. But the audience for the toy was not limited to children; as reported by the media, even businessmen interrupted their work to care for their tamagotchis. After 2 years, the tamagotchi wave ended for most people, and today one can find huge cemeteries of tamagotchis on the Internet. But tamagotchis are still sold, and from time to time, the Japanese enterprise, Bandai, offers a new tamagotchi type; the last one was able to marry another tamagotchi and even have children. This type of computer game is also used for serious purposes, such as teaching young people what is involved in caring for a child.

There are a variety of other multimedia toys similar to a pet, especially in Japan: the AIBO (a robot similar to a dog), the Furby, cats and little bears, e-versions of a red snapper, and so on. These toys are no longer produced only for children. More than 100,000 AIBOs have been sold. The AIBO has a wireless connection to the Internet and is able to serve as a diary, play MP3 music, and watch your home, but it is mainly constructed as an entertainment robot. It is able to learn and to develop, and in its autonomous mode, it functions as a complex stimulus-response machine that follows its instincts, especially its "love instinct," to come into contact with human people. Of course, this $2,000 pet is mostly used by children, and in industrialized countries, most children have already been in contact with one or another virtual pet. But there are further target groups, including technically sophisticated people who can write further software for it and elderly or chronically ill people who are not able to or do not want to own a real animal.

Seen from the perspective of media and communication research, multimedia toys are media for interactive communication between a human and an intelligent machine or a software program. An early form of interactive communication was the ELIZA program developed by Joseph Weizenbaum, a computer science professor at MIT. ELIZA was simple but high-functioning software that analyzed people's input and responded to them. Another example of interactive media is the use of global positioning systems in cars to get directions to specific locations.

The marketing of virtual pets has shown that the industry may learn how robots must function to be marketed successfully. The success of future robots for home use will probably depend not only on the work such a robot is able to do but also on its interactive competence. For people and society, of course, other questions come up: What are the effects on children of growing up with virtual pets rather than real pets? Are devices such as AIBOs valuable for elderly or ill people or for those who need emotional support? What are the consequences for the self-consciousness of humankind of virtual pets and other multimedia toys that simulate human and animal cognitive intelligence and also emotions?

—Friedrich Krotz

See also Electronic Games (various entries); Interactive Media; Interactivity; Virtual Reality

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AIBO: www.aibo.com

Information about online virtual pets: www.virtualpets.com

MULTITASKING

Multitasking is the practice of doing of more than one activity at the same time, for example, talking on the cell phone when driving. Multitasking in the context of computer use refers to the simultaneous access to or use of multiple computer applications, such as word processing, instant messaging, Web surfing, and email; it can also refer to simultaneous access to and use of multiple screens within one application. In contrast, media multitasking refers to the practice of using multiple media at the same time—such as the television and the computer, or television, telephone, and the computer, and so on. Multitasking in the context of computer use is an extension of dividing visual

attention among multiple locations on a screen, a visual skill that is extensively used in action video game play.

Research suggests that a significant characteristic of Internet use among youth, and in particular adolescents, is extensive multitasking. It is not uncommon for an adolescent to be working on a report for school, carrying on multiple instant message conversations, and downloading music—all at the same time. Multitasking typically occurs in the context of instant message use, and adolescents have reported that they like instant messaging because it allows them to have multiple conversations while at the same time carrying out other tasks on the computer, such as homework and downloading music. Although adolescents have been found to have four to five simultaneous conversations, on average they appear to have one or two conversations going on at the same time. The most common activities that teens report carrying out while instant messaging include homework, listening to music, and email.

Carrying on multiple conversations simultaneously requires users to keep track of the conversation thread in each window and even more important, to place a reply in the correct window. Not only is this cognitively challenging, mistakes can have social ramifications. In one study of 16 teenagers, two participants reported that they had on one occasion accidentally placed a response not intended for the recipient in the IM window. Because of these challenges, some adolescents report that they limit the number of active windows that they may have open at a given time. At this point, there has been no research examining the strategies that are used to carry on simultaneous conversations within an instant messaging environment. However casual observation of teen instant message use suggests that teens use many of the same strategies that have been identified in the context of chat rooms, such as brevity, chat codes, skipping punctuation, and emoticons or smileys.

How is multitasking accomplished? Adult research on task switching involving tasks such as pattern classification and arithmetic problems suggests that task switching is made possible by executive control processes that supervise the selection, initiation, execution, and termination of each task. Research is needed to determine whether switching between different applications and different windows of the same application is controlled by such executive processes. Other questions include the cognitive consequences of multitasking; for instance, is the quality of work produced (e.g., research report for school) impacted when the user is engaging in other activities at the same time (e.g., instant messaging conversations)? Finally, metacognitive knowledge about multitasking may play an important role among youth in the future; for instance, youth who multitask should know when not to multitask (e.g., when doing difficult math homework) and should know that they have to be careful when talking to multiple conversation partners at the same time.

—Kaveri Subrahmanyam

See also Computer Use, Rates of; Instant Messaging; Internet Relay Chat (IRC); Mobile Telephones

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MULTI-USER DUNGEONS/ DOMAINS (MUDs)

Multi-user dungeons/dimensions/domains (MUDs) are a text-based form of multiplayer online computer game. MUDs combine elements of *Dungeons and Dragons*-style role-playing games with Internet-based chat. Although somewhat overshadowed in recent years by the profusion of graphical video games, MUDs still maintain a following among children and adolescents and are notable for emphasizing social interaction and imagination in computer game play.

OVERVIEW AND HISTORY OF MUDS

MUD originally stood for multi-user dungeon, and most early MUDs were essentially computer versions of the popular high school dice-based role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons* from the 1970s. Both types of games immersed players in a Tolkien-esque fantasy world of the imagination. The first Multi-User Dungeon was programmed by Essex University students Roy Trubshaw and Richard Bartle in the late 1970s. Building on the foundation of earlier single-player text-based computer games, they created a virtual space in which a user logs on, creates or opens a character, and then reads descriptions of places, objects, and others in the fantasy world. To interact, the player types words or commands. As a typical fantasy MUD game progresses, players work together to fight monsters and find treasure, thereby advancing their characters and gaining more experience and power. After its creation, the fantasy adventure-style MUD dominated for the next 10 years.

Following fantasy MUDs, other types began to appear, such as science fiction adventure-themed MUDs and MUDs with the adventure component completely removed. This latter type of MUD, called *TinyMUD* by creator James Aspnes in 1989, stressed social interaction over combat and gave users the power to extend the virtual world of the MUD using a simple programming language.

Numerous MUDs currently exist, with a wide variety of themes popular with children and teens. As of September 2005, the portal website, MUD Connector .com, lists more than 1,800 different MUDs, including ones based on specific fictional universes (e.g., *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*), MUDs based on general fictional themes (e.g., horror, superheroes), religious MUDs, historical MUDs, educational MUDs, and purely social MUDs.

CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, AND MUDS

Pioneering MUD scholar Sherry Turkle suggests that it is not uncommon for children as young as 8 and 9 to play MUDs, featuring grade school favorites such as *Barbie*. Indeed, an examination of the MUDs listed on MUD Connector.com reveals a number of MUDs focused on fictional universes popular with children and especially adolescents. In addition, related forms of adolescent computer games are now taking place on Web message boards (e.g., "play-by-post gaming"). Few studies have focused specifically on this young segment of the user population, but a notable exception is the work of Amy Bruckman, who began a social MUD for children called MOOSE Crossing in the mid-1990s.

MOOSE Crossing was created to allow children age 13 and under to construct virtual worlds in a supportive community environment. Kids who enter this MUD can create virtual objects such as magic carpets and imaginary pets and build virtual rooms and cities, using a basic programming language. Visitors to MOOSE Crossing may also interact with other users from around the world. Bruckman's work on the effects of MOOSE Crossing suggests that this type of MUD teaches children creative writing, computer programming skills, and a constructionist approach to community building, in addition to being more intellectually engaging than graphical media.

MUDS AND IDENTITY EXPLORATION

Several authors have looked at the use of MUDs for identity exploration. Because they are faceless, anonymous realities, MUDs provide many users with a stage on which to construct and role-play different personas, including the opposite sex. Bruckman suggests this type of MUD play causes users to notice and reflect on gender issues in basic human interaction. MUD identity exploration can also have therapeutic effects, such as when introverts play extroverted characters or teens with family difficulties attempt to play from the perspective of a troublesome family member. Work by Turkle suggests that MUD role-playing often has the positive outcome of helping users work through issues of personal identity.

RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MUDS

The use of MUDs for building interpersonal relationships has also received some scholarly attention. Sonja Utz examined friendship development in MUDs and found that 77% of a sample of 103 MUD users reported having relationships with others online. In addition, participants who were low in skepticism toward computer-mediated communication (CMC) and who used paralanguage features of MUDs to express feelings and emotions were more likely to develop friendships.

ADDICTION TO MUDS

There are also potential negative consequences of MUD play, the most prevalent of which may be addiction. Psychological addiction to the Internet and electronic games has been documented, and this phenomenon may be strongest among adolescents involved with social virtual worlds such as MUDs. Some MUD users interviewed by Turkle reported playing 10 to 12 hours per day and even in excess of 80 hours per week. Playing this frequently could negatively impact school achievement and more.

THE FUTURE OF MUDS

What will MUDs look like in the future? Most likely, the same as now, even though the mainstream of the computer industry continues to emphasize technological advancements. Some MUDs have incorporated basic graphics, but the essence of these experiences lies in text-based interaction. Popular new graphical social games such as the Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG), which have roots in the MUD, exist now to bring player-rich visual experiences, but MUDs still have advantages over these more advanced games. MUDs remain free, at a time when many multiplayer gaming worlds have a monthly fee. MUDs also enjoy many of the benefits that print media have over graphical and moving image media. As a result, they should continue to provide children and adolescents with rich sustenance for the mind and imagination for many years to come.

—Paul Skalski

See also Electronic Games, Addiction to; Internet Use, Addiction to; Internet Use, Social; Online Relationships

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MUSIC, GROUP IDENTITY AND

Around the age of 8, children begin developing an increasing sense of independence and enter a period of transition from parental guidance to self-determination. The transition involves a shift away from a family-centered existence toward one that favors peer affiliations. This move toward independence is evident in adolescents' increasing control of their media choices and changes in their media exposure. For example, by the age of 15, adolescents appear to decrease their exposure to television while increasing their exposure to music through radio, CDs, and MP3s. Music, particularly popular music, has the potential to be a defining characteristic for the formation of interactive peer groups. In fact, the amount of music listening has been directly associated with the amount of time a youth spends among friends as opposed to family. Furthermore, one of the remarkable aspects of the role of music preference in adolescents' selective association with peers is that it can inspire connections that are independent from notable social barriers such as class.

Adolescents' music-related expression has been likened to a badge of distinction or conformity. Those who display associations with music such as hard rock or rap may do so to set themselves apart from the norm, whereas those expressing connections to mainstream pop music may be displaying signs of conformity to the norm. Either way, the displays of music preference can be relevant sources of information for adolescents to use in the process of selective

association because they provide a variety of cues for identifying and attracting peers with similar interests and attitudes. Once peer groups are formed, music can also serve as a vehicle for social interaction.

SELECTIVE ASSOCIATION

Adolescents, like other people, prefer to associate with peers who share their interests and attitudes. Factor analysis of reasons for listening to popular music indicates that one of the primary reasons is to create an external impression. In addition, many adolescents consider music taste to be a central attribute to consider when forming impressions of others and may use the expression of musical taste to imply an association with certain social groups. Knowledge of music taste can be valuable for forming impressions because music has connections to emotions and emotional values that are often not expressed publicly. The way such connections are perceived and interpreted can trigger attractive or aversive reactions. Perceptions of a shared music taste have been significantly associated with positive character appraisals and evaluations of friendship potential. For example, knowledge of rap music or heavy metal can serve as the foundation for new friendships as the fans seek out others who display some conformity to the style of dress, mannerisms, and symbols associated with the genre's popular groups. Such evaluations have also been linked to stereotypical perceptions associated with different music genres (e.g., rock music is associated with toughness, and heavy metal is associated with rebellion). Ultimately, perceptions of shared music taste appear to increase positive character appraisals and enhance the desire for friendship.

Knowledge of music taste can also influence perceptions of potential girlfriends or boyfriends. The notion of musical taste as social information has been explored in several contexts, including video dating. Researchers have found that expressions of musical tastes by college students are frequently used to determine dating potential. Bias toward different music genres had different effects based on gender. For example, an expressed bias toward classical music generally diminished the dating potential of males but enhanced the dating potential of females. Conversely, a bias toward heavy metal generally had a negative effect on the dating potential of males but positive effect on the potential of females. However, researchers observed a gender bias in the use of music taste as a factor for appraising potential dates. Males appear to place a greater social value on expressions of shared music taste than females.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Interaction among peers is an information-sharing activity, and music is an important subject for discussion among adolescents. They talk about and critique artists, songs, CDs, and videos. Music knowledge has also been identified as having social capital. Research has identified positive associations between familiarity with popular music and popularity. Adolescents who believe they are knowledgeable about a style of music frequently assume the role of opinion leader among friends or peers. Furthermore, the desire to interact with peers can foster the active pursuit of music information in the media, and the information learned from the media or a social interaction can lead to interactions with others in an effort to share the knowledge gained. Finally, music CDs and MP3s are among the most widely exchanged media among adolescent peers, and the acts of exchange reinforce group bonds and identity.

—William Kinnally

See also Music Genres (various entries); Music Genres, History of; Music Listening, Gender Effects on

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MUSIC, IMPACT OF VIOLENCE IN

Children under 6 years of age spend an average of an hour a day listening to some type of music. This exposure almost doubles between the preteen and teen years, so that by age 15, the average adolescent spends 2½ hours a day listening to music, with girls listening more than boys. Possession of music equipment such as iPODs and MP3 players is high among preteens and teens, and it does not vary with household income or parental education. Scholars have argued that such findings support the notion that music is the most important medium for adolescents and that favorite songs may be a socializing force for young people as they work toward understanding themselves and others. For this reason, the popularity of gangsta rap and hip hop among teens today has come under public scrutiny, in part because of the violent lyrics in such music. This entry describes the amount of violence in music today and the types of effects that violent songs can have on aggressive behaviors and attitudes in adolescents.

VIOLENCE IN MUSIC TODAY

Surprisingly few studies have systematically analyzed the content of music that teens listen to. In the only published study to look specifically at lyrics, Armstrong analyzed the content of 490 gangsta rap songs between 1987 and 1993. He found that 22% of the songs contained violent and misogynist lyrics. Of the songs with violence, assault was the most frequently occurring criminal offense (50%), followed by murder (31%), rape (11%), and rape and murder combined (8%). Armstrong argued that this sample represented an early period in gangsta rap's development and that current rap songs have become more explicitly violent in nature. To support this claim, Armstrong analyzed Eminem's top-selling album, *Marshall Mathers LP,* and found that 11 of the album's 14 songs (78%) contained violent lyrics. Thus, Armstrong's findings for the late 1980s and early 1990s presumably underrepresent how much violence is in rap and hip hop today. Other studies have analyzed music videos rather than just the lyrics, and they find that rap music is the genre that contains the most violence.

IMPACT OF VIOLENT MUSIC ON HOSTILITY

Several studies show a relationship between listening to violent music and being aggressive. In one study, Rubin, West, and Mitchell surveyed 243 college students about their listening habits, emotions, aggressive attitudes, and attitudes toward women. Rap and heavy metal listeners exhibited significantly more aggressive attitudes than did fans of classic rock, rhythm and blues, country, and alternative rock. Studies have also shown that adolescents who report liking rap and heavy metal music are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school for behavior problems, to engage in delinquent behaviors, and to have arrest records. Such findings suggest a relationship between listening to violent music and acting aggressively, but the causal order of these variables is difficult to untangle. In other words, is it the rap and heavy metal music that causes aggressive behavior in adolescents? Or is it that troubled and aggressive teens are drawn to violent music genres? To sort this out, experiments are needed. In one of the most ambitious experimental tests, Anderson and colleagues exposed college students to violent or nonviolent songs in a series of five studies. The researchers found that songs with violent lyrics increased feelings of hostility in four of the five experiments, and this effect occurred across a range of humorous and nonhumorous songs.

Two theories can be used to explain the impact of violent music on aggression. Social learning theory posits that children and teens can learn attitudes and behaviors from role models, particularly those who are attractive in nature and who are rewarded for their behaviors. Therefore, highly popular bands and singers who encourage violence in their songs can teach aggression to young listeners. Once such attitudes and behaviors are acquired, cognitive priming theory explains how the media can activate aggressive thoughts, feelings, and even behaviors stored in a person's memory. For a short time after exposure then, a person is in a primed state, which may temporarily reduce an individual's inhibitions against behaving in an antisocial way.

IMPACT OF VIOLENT MUSIC ON AGGRESSION AGAINST WOMEN

Researchers have also assessed whether violent songs can enhance aggression against women in particular. St. Lawrence and Joyner exposed 75 male

undergraduates to 17 minutes of sexually violent heavy metal rock, Christian heavy metal rock, or classical music and then measured attitudes toward women, acceptance of violence against women, and self-reported arousal. Males in both heavy metal conditions were significantly more likely to support sex-role stereotypes than were males in the classical music condition. Furthermore, both the sexually violent and the Christian heavy metal music increased acceptance of interpersonal violence against women and of rape myths (e.g., women who get raped hitchhiking get what they deserve), although this was only statistically significant for the Christian heavy metal listeners. Similar research has examined the impact of gangsta rap on attitudes toward women. Studies show that male participants with little previous exposure to the genre who are then exposed to gangsta rap lyrics express more adversarial views toward women than do men who are not exposed to such lyrics.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The increasing popularity of violent music genres like gangsta rap has created a heated debate among members of the music industry, parents, and policymakers. In 1985, several wives of U.S. congressmen formed the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) because of their concern about violent and sexual music. The PMRC asked the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) to provide parental advisory labels on recordings that contained explicit content. After congressional pressure, the RIAA agreed to label explicit audio recordings. Today, the labels are applied by individual record companies and artists in the form of a black and white logo with the words "parental advisory, explicit content." Unfortunately, the labels have not been very effective because many parents do not seem to use them. Moreover, it appears that the labels can attract older children and adolescents to the very music that their parents want to restrict.

Compared to the vast amount of research on violent television programming, the literature available on violent music is very limited. The studies that exist do seem to indicate that exposure to violent songs can have harmful effects, at least in the short run. Future research needs to explore age differences more systematically, with a particular focus on preteens and teens. Research also needs to be more precise about what types of lyrics and genres are most likely to encourage aggressive attitudes and behaviors and among which types of teens. Finally, longitudinal research is needed to assess the long-term impact of exposure to violent music.

—Nicole Martins

See also Depression, Media Use and; Hip Hop, Violence in; Music Genres, Heavy Metal; Music Listening, Uses of; Music Lyrics, Effects of

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MUSIC, PERSONAL IDENTITY AND

During adolescence, defining a personal identity is an important developmental task. Many young people use music and musicians they adore to distinguish themselves from their peers. Thus, music choice often gives an important impression of an adolescent character under construction. Music is meant to be fun, to brighten life, but the development and expression of musical taste can also be a serious statement about

one's values and attitudes, about the person one is or wants to be. Many adolescents see music and musicians as particularly relevant to gender identity, daily behavior, fashion expression, social manner, and worldview. The influence of the medium and its artists on overall identity development is pervasive, complex, and far-reaching in its cultural significance.

THEORIES ON IDENTITY

The concept of identity has become fundamental for the way people in industrialized societies experience and talk about themselves. We tend to think about ourselves as having a hard core of a self, character, or personality—a core that is developed in our youth and remains relatively stable and consistent over time; and we assume that through our individuality, we differ from other people in essential ways. It is hard to imagine, but the concept of personal identity dates back only to William James's social philosophy, which he developed a little more than a century ago. In addition, Erik Erikson's psychological identity theory first appeared in the 1960s. Talking about one's identity is so common that the social science roots of the concept are lost in the past. Identity as a psychological concept has passed into everyday language and experience, and it has become a mainstay of popular speech and self-description.

In his seminal work, *The Principles of Psychology*, William James (1842–1910) distinguished between the *I* and the *me*. The I refers to a deep-seated feeling that I exist as a subject; the me is that part of my subjectivity that the I reflects on, that is, the characteristics of myself that I can know and describe. Thus, the I is the real self of a person, and the me is the attitudes, values, and skills that I think of as characteristic for the individual that I am.

Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1902–1994) extended James's notions in his influential *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. Erikson posited the psychoanalytic theory that the ego (self) held an uneasy position between the two towering forces of the id (urgings of a broadly sexual and aggressive nature) and the superego (internalized morality). Erikson sought to further define and delineate the ego's territory, and in doing so, he coined the psychological term *identity.* He noticed that a popular concept of identity first appeared in the media in the 1940s, linked to the experience of many World War II veterans who seemed to have the feeling that they were not "the same person" as before they fought in the war. Erikson argued that this loss of self and the severe psychological suffering attached to it proved how fundamental a basic sense of identity is.

The development of identity is a social process that starts in childhood and spurts during adolescence, when youngsters are expected to develop a more detailed personality. Identity development is a process of self-definition and differentiation in a social context. Erikson specifies identity development as the mutual blending of personality and culture until an identity with more or less unique features is established. Identity is achieved when somebody knows who he or she "is." He or she has a delineated self-concept, has an idea about relationships to salient others, has acquired a position in the work field and the community, and has made an ideological commitment. Although adolescence is a crucial period for the carving out of individuality, Erikson emphasizes that identity development is a lifelong, enduring process.

Other theorists have posited the notion that identity is of a changeable nature. Authors in the social constructivist tradition have questioned the concept of a central core of identity and stress that identity construction is an ongoing process in the face of interactions we have with other people and cultural forces. Depending on whom we meet, we can have different identities, implying that a single person may have multiple, sometimes even contradictory, identities. However, Jerome Bruner, one of the most influential psychologists of the 20th century, has stressed that identity construction does not always bifurcate. We construct our identities through the stories or narratives we tell about ourselves to other people (and to ourselves), and these stories do have a historical continuity and focus; therefore, we experience ourselves as the same kind of person over time.

MUSIC AS A SOURCE OF IDENTITY

Adolescence is a psychologically sensitive period for identity formation. Identity becomes progressively more differentiated with age. Adolescents develop their own identity through continuous comparisons with peers, leading to strong evaluations of what one should or shouldn't be, what is fit for one's identity and what is definitely not. During this period, music and musicians provide roles and role models, and sometimes conversely anti-role models, for the delineation of identity. Music taste may be more important among adolescents than among grownups, who have

already achieved a more or less stable identity and can tolerate and even value music that is not directly in their taste spectrum. Music may be of the utmost importance for young people who are part of peer crowds or youth cultures that revolve around a musical center: punks, heavy metal fans, hip hop fans, or ravers, and so on.

Pop music's dominant themes relate to romance and sexuality, and as such, they are highly attractive for young people. The lyrics and visual language inform adolescents about the mechanisms of falling in love, loving someone, and dealing with love sickness, desperation, and loneliness. Songs may intimately relate to one's own circumstances. With the musical artist as someone inspiring or comforting, one may identify with this bigger than life special friend and tend to see him or her as a life example. In general, many adolescents hold artists in high regard because of their attitudes toward life and the ideas and values they promote through their work. Consequently, they take these artists as role models for what they want to be themselves. This may range from picking up clues about proper gender roles and sexuality, to imitating what to wear and how to express oneself socially, to internalizing sophisticated notions on social and political relations.

Music may contribute to gender identity. Girls tend to listen more to pop songs, dance music, and romantic ballads, whereas boys generally prefer louder, brasher music. These preferences are not the expression of natural, fixed differences. During the 1990s, for instance, boys became more interested in dance music, and girls acquired a stronger taste for rock. However, music may be framed as more masculine or more feminine, and even musical instruments are often perceived as more male or female. Music tastes vary to some degree, and so, too, the way in which boys and girls relate to their idols often differs. Whereas girls fantasize about closely relating to their favorite artists and being their special friend or lover, boys more often aggrandize themselves as potential stars on huge stages, that is, becoming idols themselves. Thus, both genders use music preference and their fantasies relating to idols or pop fame itself to amplify their gender identity. Pop music offers a range of examples with whom to identify; artists and lyrics encompass a wide variety of gender and sexual identities, ranging from extremely traditional to wildly liberal, from 100% heterosexual to radically gay or intriguingly ambivalent and diffuse.

Furthermore, artists have always been style icons, and although their music is diverse, they have had a decisive influence on dress, manner, and expression, molded and fitted into an individualized form by their fans. Artists have displayed a kaleidoscope of styles to emulate. These include the male "ducktail" hairstyle and the female bobby sox and poodle skirts of the rock and roll 1950s; the extremely long hair and the tie-died India cotton dresses of the hippies in the 1960s and 1970s; the ripped jeans and jackets and the sneakers of heavy metal in the 1980s; the baggy trousers and hoods of hip hop in the 1990s; and on into the future.

Last but not least, pop music has influenced the ideas and values of young people. The advent of rock and roll in the mid-1950s has linked to a rejection of the conservative mainstream ethic of modesty and hard work in favor of a more fun and leisure-oriented mentality. During the sixties, pop musicians were the forerunners of a cultural revolution that posited hedonistic principles of less strict sexual morals coupled with an anti-materialist, environmentally conscious, and pacifist set of ideas. Seventies punk has been framed as nihilist resistance to the capitalist system, and eighties and nineties hip hop has addressed issues of racism and poverty among minority groups in the United States. Music offers a wide spectrum of ideas to use in identity formation—from traditional Christian values and redneck conservatism, to over-the-top hedonism and leftwing politics. Stars such as Hilary Duff sang at the festivities around U.S. President Bush's inaugural in 2005. Other immensely popular artists such as Eminem and Kanye West accused Bush of dictatorial tendencies and not caring about black people. Thus, music covers a range of ideologies.

—Tom ter Bogt and Stephen Soitos

See also Adolescents: Developmental Needs of, and Media; Cultural Identity; Gender Identity Development; Music, Group Identity and

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MUSIC, REBELLIOUSNESS AND

Rebellion is a key topic in popular music lyrics, comparable to romance/sexuality. Many artists have sung lines similar to those of Pink Floyd in *Another Brick in the Wall*—"We don't need no education [. . .] Teachers, leave those kids alone." In the 1960s, while the importance of love as topic in music lyrics decreased, songs questioning societal conventions emerged in chart-topping music. Listening to music with rebellious lyrics is common today, and so is public criticism of such content. For instance, in testimony before a U.S. Senate committee, the American Academy of Pediatrics expressed great concern about possible impacts on teens of music lyrics containing references to drugs, sex, and violence.

REBELLION IN THE LYRICS OF POPULAR MUSIC

The two music genres that are primarily associated with rebellion and defiant messages are rock and, more recently, rap/hip hop. Interestingly, they are also the two most popular music genres in the United States. A content analysis by Knobloch-Westerwick et al. of rock and rap songs at the top of the charts in 1993 and 2003 revealed that the majority of these songs contain rebellious lines. Furthermore, compared to rock, rap/hip hop lyrics tend to allude more often to anti-normative but nonaggressive behavior, more specifically to drug use, partying/clubbing, and casual cursing, and they more often contain references to sexual acts.

But lyrics about antisocial, aggressive behavior, including violence or death, and lyrics about violent sexual acts, containing vulgar or offensive language and expressing hostility, are also commonplace in the charts. For instance, Yo-Yo referred to violence in the hit song from 1993, "Ibwin' Wit MY Crewin": "See, I'll hang yo ass by a tree, getting chopped while your neck snap at 3." This reactive music content occurs more often in rock music than in rap/hip hop. In both genres, rebellion has become more mundane in the last decade. Today, more than 80% of the most popular rock and rap/hip hop charts contain rebellion.

EFFECTS OF REBELLIOUS MUSIC

Rebellion in music comes in a variety of forms, and the various possible impacts have not been examined. Several studies investigated effects of aggressive music lyrics, which are to be considered a kind of rebellious music, but produced mixed findings. However, it was repeatedly demonstrated that such lyrics instigate aggressive thoughts and feelings. In turn, these aggressive inclinations may influence interpretations of ongoing social interactions. As an example, a teenager who listens to violent lyrics in a song while driving is likely to hold more aggressive thoughts, which can cause him or her to drive more aggressively. Hence, such content could create aggressive behavior.

APPEAL OF REBELLIOUS MUSIC

Many surveys have found that people with a need for distinction and sensation seeking report enjoying rebellious music such as heavy metal or punk. But as rebellion in music has become so widespread, the differentiation in listeners is more visible in rebellious adolescents' rejection of nonrebellious tunes, as found by Bleich, Zillmann, and Weaver. It has been suggested that rebelliousness, as it relates to preferences for nonconformist music, could be more closely connected to sensation seeking than to hostility and anger. Rebellion, as related to defiant music consumption, might not be motivated by latent hostility and aggression but by seeking of fun and arousal. Dillman Carpentier, Knobloch, and Zillmann identified fun-seeking rebelliousness and disinhibition as better predictors than hostility and frustration-motivated rebelliousness for actually observed selective exposure to rock and rap music. It appears as if defiant messages have become more mainstream, so that fun-seeking music listeners now gain excitement from rebellious song lyrics and these are no longer so much outside the norms, at least in the context of popular music. Conceivably, young adults may gravitate toward this type of music, not so much to celebrate aggression and violence, but to somehow define themselves socially.

Studies that examined how adolescents and young adults perceive same-age others based on expressed music preferences underline the importance of music for social perception. For example, a teenage boy who enjoys easy-listening music might be considered wimpy by his peers. It is fairly obvious that teenagers often employ music to alienate their parents, which can achieved by sheer volume, favored artists' looks and demeanor, lyrics, or provocative musical styles. For instance, The Beatles' hairstyle was irritating to many established adults at the time, and Elvis Presley's suggestive dancing violated general norms in the early days of rock. Apparently, rebellious music has to reinvent

itself continuously to remain provocative. This seems more difficult today, given the saturation of the charts and the media with aggression or sexuality, which used to be outside the norms but is becoming commonplace.

—*Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick*

See also Aggression, Music and; Aggression, Music Videos and; Drug Use, Depictions of; Hip Hop, Youth Culture and; Hip Hop, Violence in; Music, Impact of Violence in; Music Genres, Heavy Metal; Priming Theory; Sensation Seeking; Violence (various entries)

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MUSIC, TRANSGRESSIVE HISTORY OF

Popular music has often been *transgressive,* meaning that it violates cultural norms and expectations. Although popular music has changed dramatically over the past century, it has been consistently portrayed as offending the moral standards of the mainstream and provoking the young into deviant behavior. This quality in popular music goes back at least to the rise of jazz in the early 20th century and has continued through rock, heavy metal, and rap/hip hop.

Jazz was the music of the youth culture from the early years of the 20th century through the 1940s, although its dominant form changed from New Orleans jazz to swing to bop. Jazz was seen from the beginning, by both its fans and its critics, as highly sensual music, music that would stimulate sexual desire. This characteristic of jazz was due to the musical qualities of the songs, not the lyrics. Many of the most popular jazz songs had no lyrics at all, and when there were lyrics, they were usually innocuous. The sexual quality of jazz derived from the music—its beat, its energy, its intensity.

The other quality that made jazz sexually charged was that it was dance music. In dancing to jazz, the young demonstrated its sexually transgressive power. Jazz dancing was spontaneous, energetic, and intense like the music, and partners grasped each other tightly and moved rapidly. Both adults and young people recognized the transgressive quality of jazz, especially with regard to sexuality, but adults feared it while the young embraced it with enthusiasm.

By the mid-1950s, jazz had been supplanted by rock and roll. Like jazz, the transgressive quality of rock and roll was in the music, not the lyrics. The lyrics of rock and roll classics like "Hound Dog," "Johnny B. Goode," and "Tutti Frutti" contain nothing offensive. But like jazz, the music of rock and roll was perceived by both its fans and its critics to be sexually arousing. The pounding beat of rock and roll, the loud raw sound of the electric guitars (amplified to unprecedented levels with new technology), and the passionate vocal styles of the singers seemed like an invitation to be sexually transgressive.

Also like jazz, rock and roll was dance music, and the dancing styles that accompanied rock and roll added to the transgressive appeal of it. Rock and roll dance styles were largely borrowed from jazz and shared with jazz dancing high energy, frequent close contact between partners, and a reliance on spontaneous, unscripted dance movements. This style of dancing reinforced and extended the transgressive sexual power of rock and roll.

Scholars who write on popular music usually make a distinction between the rock and roll music of the 1950s and the rock music that began in the 1960s

and continues today. The beginning of rock is usually marked with the rise to prominence of the Beatles in 1964. Rock in the 1960s and early 1970s possessed a strong transgressive appeal. Sex was a transgressive area for rock, as it had been for jazz and rock and roll. For both rock and roll and rock, the transgressiveness was not so much in the lyrics as in the music and the style of the performers, but with rock, the styles of the performers became more extreme. The sexual exhibitionism of performers such as Jim Morrison of The Doors soon made Elvis's hip-shaking seem relatively tame.

In addition to sex, rock extended the transgressive into three other areas: drugs, politics, and Satan. Many 1960s performers were rumored to use drugs, and two well-known performers, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, died of drug overdoses. A type of rock known as acid rock developed (*acid* being slang for the drug LSD), in which the music suggested the psychological state experienced under a hallucinogenic drug. Although rock was transgressive with regard to sex, the link to drugs was perhaps even more transgressive because of the illegality of drug use and the potential for a deadly overdose.

Rock was also transgressive in the political views it expressed. Some rock songs openly advocated political revolution, some protested American involvement in the Vietnam War, and some expressed cynicism about the integrity of political leaders, for example, The Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again." Rock songs such as these were transgressive in rejecting the authority of political leaders and political institutions.

The other form in which rock was transgressive in the 1960s and early 1970s was in its use of Satan. The first rock performers to make use of Satan as a transgressive figure were the Rolling Stones. Through songs such as "Sympathy for the Devil" and album titles such as *Their Satanic Majesty's Request,* the Stones promoted an image of themselves as transgressors by associating themselves with the ultimate transgressor.

By the mid-1970s, rock had become mainstream and had lost a considerable part of its transgressive power. Along came punk, whose aim was to be outrageous, to break deliberately every taboo. Unlike jazz, rock and roll, and rock, styles in which the music was more important to fans than the lyrics, in punk, the music counted for little. The lyrics of punk songs were its most transgressive element. Topics of the songs varied widely and included unemployment, racism, the British monarchy, and sex, but the undercurrent of all the songs was anger, aggressiveness, hatred, and nihilism.

The style of punk was also blatantly and deliberately transgressive. Performers adopted names such as Johnny Rotten and Sid Vicious; they spit and even vomited on stage. Performers and fans alike sought to be shockingly transgressive in their appearance. Parts of the head were shaved and the remaining hair dyed in loud colors and spiked into plumes of various designs. "Jewelry" included safety pins through the nose or ears. Stage props included articles of sexual fetishism and bondage, as well as Nazi swastikas. Punk performers were not sympathetic to neo-Nazis—on the contrary, punk performers were active in the "Rock Against Racism" movement—but the swastika was useful as a transgressive device, another way to provoke outrage. Punk may have shown the limits of the appeal of the transgressive. The appeal of punk was brief and limited to a relatively small core of fans, perhaps because the music itself had little appeal, and transgressiveness alone was not enough to carry it for very long.

Heavy metal music originated in the 1960s with groups such as Led Zeppelin, Iron Maiden, and Black Sabbath, but it reached the peak of its popularity in the 1980s when heavy metal bands such as Metallica topped the charts. Heavy metal is transgressive musically in its loudness and its abrasiveness. The fact that most nonfans abhor the music only makes it more appealing to its fans, the "headbangers" or "metal-heads," because it places them in an exclusive, daringly transgressive minority. Lyrically, heavy metal is transgressive in multiple ways. Many songs contain political content, and as in punk, this content is transgressive in attacking the legitimacy of a variety of social institutions. Songs attack corruption in politics, religion, and the legal system and deplore the destruction of the environment by multinational corporations. Some heavy metal songs use Satan as a transgressive symbol.

Violence is the most common theme in heavy metal songs, and the violence of the songs marked a new level of transgressiveness in popular music. The music of heavy metal is well-suited to expressions of violence. The rough distorted guitar sound, the pounding bass and drums, and the towering volume of it all is exceptionally effective in portraying lyrical themes of death, war, destruction, and murder. No prior popular songs had depicted scenes of such violence and brutality. Heavy metal was popular for a variety of reasons, including the creativity and musical talent of the performers and the political

content of the songs, but the violent quality of the music and lyrics was certainly part of its transgressive appeal.

Rap (also called *hip hop*) began in the late 1970s as street music in New York City and achieved widespread popularity by the late 1980s. Today, it is far and away the most popular genre across American ethnic groups. Music does not carry a great deal of importance in most rap songs. What matters most in rap, and what gives it transgressive power, is the lyrics. Although not all rap songs have transgressive themes, the themes that have given rap its greatest popularity and notoriety as *gangsta rap* are transgressive themes of sexual exploitation and violence.

Sexual exploitation of women was an occasional theme in rock, punk, and heavy metal songs, but rap songs carried this theme to a new transgressive extreme by adding a deeper edge of contempt and routinely blending sex with violence. Women in rap songs are often referred to as *hos* (whores) and *bitches.* Rap lyrics rage and rant against women for deception, dishonesty, sexual temptation, and sexual resistance. Sexuality is frequently portrayed as the man's successful assertion of power over a woman. Women are depicted being raped, beaten, knifed, and shot, and they are often dehumanized, portrayed as deserving whatever contempt and violence they get.

In addition to sexual violence against women, violence is a theme of rap songs in other ways. Most of the prominent rap performers are African Americans, and rap often depicts violent confrontations among young men in poor, urban, largely black areas. Performers describe murders they have committed, brag about evading others' murder attempts, and warn adversaries not to cross them or face potential violence. Certain groups, such as gay men and Asian Americans, are singled out for contempt and threats.

Although some rock, punk, and heavy metal songs also contain lyrics with violent themes, rap is more transgressive by making violence the heart of the genre. Rap performers have generally sought to portray the violence in the songs as a statement of the economic and political realities of urban America, and therefore virtuous, rather than as simply transgressive for the sake of gaining attention and selling recordings. However, critics of rap have argued that rap performers contribute to the stereotype of young black men as potentially violent.

—Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

See also Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in; Hip Hop, Violence in; Music, Impact of Violence in; Music, Rebelliousness and; Music Genres, Heavy Metal; Music Genres, Hip Hop; Music Genres, History of

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MUSIC GENRES, DANCE/HOUSE/TECHNO

The terms *dance, house,* and *techno music* are often confused and interchanged among the mainstream public. Each genre, however, actually has its own definition and unique history. Although details regarding the history and credit for the origin of each style vary, certain generalities can be made regarding the characteristics of each style and key influencers in the

development of each particular sound. This entry defines and clarifies the definition of each genre, addresses some key elements in the creation of each genre's unique sound, and discusses the general historical background and some key innovators of each style.

DANCE/ELECTRONICA

Dance music, in the context of this particular grouping, does not simply mean "any music we can dance to." While individual interpretations abound, the term *dance* is generally used as an umbrella term that is virtually synonymous with *electronica,* which encompasses a number of musical subgenres.

Electronica is a broad term used to describe various forms of 1990s/21st-century electronic music; the style is mostly a hybrid of Chicago House, Detroit Techno, and New York Garage. The musical form emerged in the 1990s with the advent of sophisticated electronic turntables, drum machines, and computer software capable of producing myriad synthetic beats, melodies, and "loops" or "samples" (a portion of a song "cut" from the original track and played over and over again within a new track). Particularly in the late 1990s, the ever-evolving electronica style split into multiple subgenres, two of which included *house* and *techno.* This niche-ing and specialization of the subgenres of electronica is ongoing, as the mainstream pop music industry frequently attempts to co-opt and commodify each style.

HOUSE/CHICAGO HOUSE

House music—a term that originally referred to the kind of music heard at the Warehouse, a gay Chicago nightclub—originated mostly in Chicago and is attributed to Frankie Knuckes, who DJ-ed at the Warehouse between 1979 and 1983. House music evolved from the disco era in the early 1980s, drawing from various musical forms such as jazz, synth pop (which relies heavily on synthesizers), reggae, and R&B (rhythm and blues).

The formal characteristics of house music include a steady, rhythmic, up-tempo beat of 120–140 beats per minute (bpm), and it is composed mainly through the use of sequencers (electronic composition tools, including drum machines), synthesizers (electronic sound generators), and samplers (electronic devices used to record, manipulate, and play back existing sounds, usually pre-recorded music). The count is usually 4/4, or four beats per measure of music, with heavy reliance on kickdrums (bass drum) and hihats (cymbal-like sounds) to produce a "low beat/high clap" effect. In addition to DJ Frankie Knuckles, DJs Farley "Jackmaster" Funk, Jesse Saunders, Steve "Silk" Hurley, and Ron Hardy are some of the pioneers of the house sound. The characteristic that most distinguishes house music from techno music is house music's heavy use of vocals and lyrics, often sampled and used separately from their original recordings.

Current house artists include D.H.T. and Daft Punk. The house genre can be further subdivided into categories such as hard house, deep house, and acid house, among others, each with its own stylistic peculiarities.

TECHNO/DETROIT TECHNO

The term *techno* is most commonly—and mistakenly—used to describe all forms of electronic music in general. In reality, techno music originated in Detroit, more precisely in the suburb of Belleville, and was first considered a subset of the Chicago house sound. The term *techno* was subsequently attached to create the term *Detroit techno* by the techno group The Belleville Three and dance music entrepreneur Neil Rushton in order to distinguish the techno style from Chicago house. The techno sound emerged from the styles of German musical innovators Kraftwerk and the Electro-Funk DJ Afrika Bambaataa. Detroit DJs most credited with honing the techno style include Kevin Saunderson, Juan Atkins, and Derrick May.

The techno style is known for its rhythmically repetitive and mechanically textured nature. Melodic content is usually minor, and lyrical content is sparse if used at all. Compositionally, techno follows a 4/4 pattern as house does. Unlike house music, however, techno has a faster beat—usually between 130 and 140 bpm, although further subgenres of techno are faster, harsher, and more intense, such as hardcore and Grabber, which reach up to 200 and 220 bpm, respectively. Furthermore, the techno style incorporates a 16-step pattern, where breaks, emphases, or changes in the musical pattern take place on every 16th or 32nd beat. The pattern-like nature of techno makes it ideal for mixing and overlapping to facilitate hours of continuous play by DJs. Techno music is highly sequencer driven, with overlapping drum patterns intermixed with electronic effects. The overall effect is a syncopated layering of sounds. The final product of a piece of techno music is called a *track* as opposed to a *song.*

As the techno sound grew in popularity, popular artists began to incorporate its style—one notable example is Madonna's "Ray of Light." Techno artists such as Moby and The Prodigy keep the techno sound within the mainstream. Subgenres of techno include trance, hardcore, ambient, Grabber, and speedcore, among others.

RAVES AND ECSTASY

One can hardly discuss techno without touching on the dance phenomenon known as the *rave.* Detroit techno made its way across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom and Germany, where it morphed into further subgenres and spawned the *rave culture,* which then migrated its way back to the United States along with new, European-inspired subgenres of the techno sound. Summarily, raves are dance gatherings where various forms of techno (and house) are played for hours, and sometimes days, at a time. The typical rave is usually accompanied by lighting effects such as strobe lights and laser beams of various colors, and many ravegoers carry or wear various types of glow sticks to create attractive lighted patterns while dancing. Large raves can attract tens of thousands. Raves are commonly associated with youth, who sometimes travel impressive distances to attend underground raves advertised via the Internet, word of mouth, or flyers distributed by hand.

Although many ravegoers do not use drugs, raves are commonly associated with the drug Ecstasy (MDMA, or methylenedioxymethamphetamine, also commonly known as E, X, or XTC), which creates feelings of euphoria and a sense of well-being and stimulates locomotor activity, thus enabling ravegoers who use the substance to dance for hours.

—Michelle Arganbright

See also Music Listening, Uses of; Raves

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MUSIC GENRES, HEAVY METAL

Heavy metal is a type of popular music that is characterized by a rough, distorted guitar sound, pounding bass and drums, and vocals that are yelled and screamed as much as sung, all of it typically played at a thunderous volume. There are many subgenres of heavy metal, including thrash metal, speed metal, power metal, and death metal, but they all share these musical characteristics. Across subgenres, violence is the most common lyrical theme, but many songs contain political content, attacking the legitimacy of a variety of social institutions such as politics, religion, and the legal system. Currently popular metal groups include Morbid Angel, Corrosion of Conformity, Cannibal Corpse, Atheist, Kreator, Overkill, and Rottweiler.

Heavy metal fans tend to be young (12 to 25 years old), white, and male, although there are exceptions. The popularity of the music spans social classes and nationalities—heavy metal is popular all over the world. For many fans, heavy metal is not just a musical preference but a central part of their identity. They call themselves "metalheads" or "headbangers" and frequently wear black concert T-shirts with the logo of a heavy metal band to display to others their allegiance to heavy metal. For them, the songs are not merely a form of entertainment but an ideology, a worldview, a way of explaining the world and their place in it.

The history of heavy metal goes back to the late 1960s and early 1970s and groups such as Led

Zeppelin, Iron Maiden, and Black Sabbath. The peak of heavy metal's popularity—and controversy—came during the 1980s, with performers such as Metallica, Ozzy Osbourne, Megadeth, Judas Priest, and Slayer selling millions of albums and performing in large arenas all over the world. Although heavy metal has declined slightly in popularity since then, the most popular metal groups still sell millions of albums and play in arenas around the world filled with fervently devoted fans. According to a recent Kaiser Foundation study by Donald Roberts, Ulla Foehr, and Victoria Rideout, hard rock/heavy metal is the third most popular music genre among American adolescents, after rap/hip hop, and alternative rock.

Although heavy metal has been the topic of considerable public concern and criticism, not all heavy metal is controversial. Metal is quite diverse, from "lite metal" groups such as Mötley Crüe and Kiss, which sing mostly about partying and sex, to groups such as Metallica, which address serious social issues such as war and environmental destruction, to groups such as Slayer whose themes are relentlessly violent. Controversy and criticism has focused not on the lite metal groups but on the other heavy metal groups, especially concerning issues of suicide and violence.

Is there any credible evidence that heavy metal promotes suicide or violence? Jeffrey Arnett (1996) addressed this question directly in research on heavy metal fans by asking them if they listen to the music when they are in any particular mood and if the music *puts* them in any particular mood. Consistently, they said they listen to the music especially when they are angry—not surprising, in view of the violent, angry quality of the music and lyrics. However, they also said consistently that the music has the effect of calming them down. Heavy metal songs have a cathartic effect on their anger; in other words, they use the music as a way of purging their anger harmlessly. The songs express their alienated view of the world and help them cope with the anger and frustration of living in a world they see as hopelessly corrupt. Because it has this cathartic effect on their anger and frustration, if anything, the music makes them *less* likely to commit suicide or violence than they would be if they did not have the music available to use for this purpose. This cathartic effect of heavy metal has also been demonstrated experimentally.

Of course, it remains possible that the despair and violence of the songs could act as an inspiration to suicide or violence in some extreme cases. Adolescents can respond to the same media stimulus in widely different ways. However, for the great majority of the millions of adolescent metalheads, heavy metal appears to act as a useful outlet for difficult youthful emotions.

In addition to concerns about suicide and violence, there have been concerns that heavy metal promotes alienation among adolescents and makes them more likely to engage in risky behavior. It is true that metalheads tend to have a dark view of the world. They are alienated from mainstream society; cynical about teachers, politicians, and religious leaders; and highly pessimistic about the future of the human race. Many (although certainly not all) have troubled relationships with their parents. Arnett (1992) also found higher rates of risk behavior among metalheads than among other adolescents, in areas such as high-speed driving, drug use, and vandalism.

However, there is no evidence that adolescents' alienation or risk behavior can accurately be blamed on the music. On the contrary, adolescents who are already alienated are attracted to heavy metal because it articulates their alienation. Adolescents who have high rates of risk behavior are attracted to heavy metal for the same reason they are attracted to risk behavior: Both heavy metal and risk behavior appeal to adolescents who enjoy especially novel and intense experiences—who are high in sensation seeking, in other words.

Although love for heavy metal does not appear to cause alienation or risk behavior, one more definite effect of the music is that many metalheads take up electric guitar or another musical instrument in the hope of becoming a heavy metal star. More than one third of the metalheads Arnett interviewed in his study intended to be involved in heavy metal music as a career, usually as a heavy metal star performing before large, worshipful audiences. However, this aspiration was more fantasy than reality. Although many of the metalheads Arnett interviewed had begun to play an instrument, not one of them was a member of a working metal band.

Heavy metal is an ideology, and as with most ideologies, its adherents devote considerable attention to distinguishing who is a true believer and who is not. Although lite metal bands are often grouped under the heavy metal banner by outsiders, most metalheads regard such groups with contempt, as "posers" who are falsely presenting themselves as heavy metal performers. Metalheads use words like *true* and *real* to describe the metal bands they regard as legitimate. They regard themselves as part of a vanguard distinguished by an

uncompromising focus on speaking the truth about the way the world really is, ugly as this truth may be. Nonbelievers may regard heavy metal as immoral and even abhorrent, but to metalheads, heavy metal is a statement of the highest morality, a beacon of courage and honesty in an otherwise corrupt and hopeless world.

—Jeffrey Jensen Arnett

See also Music, Impact of Violence in; Music, Transgressive History of; Music Listening, Problem Behavior and

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MUSIC GENRES, HIP HOP

Hip hop and rap emerged as African American music styles in the late 1970s. Since then, they have influenced not only an increasing spectrum of music, but also fashion, visual arts, television and film, literature, attitudes, and lifestyles as a whole. The hip hop lifestyle has its own media representations, magazines, and commercials, and it is an example of how music that was originally a part of alternative local protest movements has become a broader music and lifestyle trend in global culture.

The roots of rap as a musical form that concentrates on rhythmic text and intense beats are to be found among early 20th-century talking blues, spoken passages in gospel later, and electric rhythm and blues by Bo Diddley and especially by the famous singer James Brown, often called the grandfather of rap. Other influences are critical poems by African American writers and singers such as Gil Scott-Heron and by Jamaican reggae DJs who mixed sounds with their turntables. In New York, house parties with similar music styles became a fashion in the 1970s, and the first rap record was published in 1979 by the Sugarhill Gang, "Rapper's Delight."

Mass success started with the old school Kurtis Blow and especially Grandmaster Flash with his hit single, "The Message." Rap by then had become a genre that would soon affect youth culture not only in the United States but across the globe. The movie, *Wild Style,* promoted music and life in the neighborhood (the 'hood) of big cities and gangland, as well as the new street art forms, graffiti and break dancing, and the technique of "scratching," whereby the DJ becomes the master of ceremonies when he mixes several records to create a new sound. A new fashion, with baseball caps, cargo jeans, and sneakers, was adopted by the young and later by the adult mainstream. From New York, rap moved to Los Angeles and other major cities. Soon, rap and hip hop (named after the electronic beats of rhythm machines used in this music) were big trends in both the music and lifestyle of the young generation, with super stars such as Run-DMC, L.L. Cool J, and, as the first white band, the Beastie Boys. In its further differentiation, major subtrends were gangsta rap with controversial artists, Public Enemy, later 2Pac, Dr. Dre, Ice Cube, and Snoop Dogg, and fusions with other music styles, such as jazz, pop, and even folk, with artists like Vanilla Ice, De La Soul, and Arrested Development. Women rappers also emerged on the scene, with stars such as Salt-N-Pepa and Queen Latifah. Rap and hip hop also made it into other regions of the world with performers such as the Streets in Great Britain, MC Solaar in France, and Fanta 4, Bushido, and Naidoo in Germany.

In particular, the gangsta rap culture promoted an alternative attitude and behavior for the young. Being a member of a gang, having a criminal record, and being involved in shootings were regarded as romantic heroism. But the hip hop lifestyle also soon became associated with symbols of an ultra-rich trash culture that prized gold chains, tuned luxury cars, and explicit sexual behavior, often promoting male dominance. Thus, the values of hip hop culture were seen to have moved from criticism of the establishment to superficial nouveau-riche macho lifestyles. But this is only one facet of hip hop and rap.

Musically, the big stars of the early 21st century developed texts, sounds, and melodies that rank among the most popular genres of the past hundred years. 50 Cent has become a superstar who not only rules the

music polls but also is a major role model whose life is reported in youth, adult, and society magazines. Along with other African American stars like P. Diddy, he influences fashion and design, is featured in movies, such as *Get Rich or Die Tryin',* and is among the biggest celebrities around the world. Equally, white rappers have become part of the hip hop culture. Most prominently, music superstar Eminem tops the hit polls, appeared in the autobiographical movie, *8 Mile,* and is regarded as an international pop icon. Because some of these artists are reported to have been involved in crime and drug use, outsiders have challenged their value as role models for the young. However, rap and hip hop musicians obviously fulfill adolescents' desire for controversial heroes who follow an anti-establishment lifestyle. Thus, these latter-day stars are in the same tradition as Elvis Presley, the Rolling Stones, Iggy Pop, the Ramones, the Sex Pistols, and Nirvana.

In the early 21st century, elements of hip hop culture can also be found in television, the movies, literature, and visual arts. Again, an originally youth-based music form has had an impact on a whole culture. Apart from the numerous music video clips featured on TV channels such as MTV, hip hop elements appear in programs like "Pimp my Ride" and "Sweet Sixteen." Hip hop and a critical treatment of drug abuse are features of movies such as *New Jack City.* Rap clothes have been a global fashion trend since the early 1980s, now even challenging high fashion in terms of popularity and promoting a relaxed look in street wear with jeans, sweatshirts, and sneakers. For more than 20 years, rap fashion has been the accepted uniform of the young generation, and the look is also adapted by adults and worn even in business environments. Rap culture graffiti have become an art form, with top works of artists such as the late Keith Haring or Jean-Michel Basquiat fetching prices in the millions of dollars. The rhythm and structure of rap and hip hop texts have found their way into modern novels and the poems of both African Americans and other writers.

—Jo Groebel

See also Hip Hop, Youth Culture and; Music, Rebelliousness and; Youth Culture

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MUSIC GENRES, HISTORY OF

The concept of *music genre* (or *musical genre*) relies on the assumption that pieces of music can be grouped together into categories according to distinctive stylistic traits that enable audiences to tell them apart. This presupposes that various elements of music—such as melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and texture—can be both aggregated and distinguished by members of society for whom such typologies are meaningful.

CAVEATS

Some caveats need to be established when considering the history of music genres, especially as applied to children and adolescents. The first cautionary note is that different media (e.g., radio, recordings, film) commonly use different typologies of music genres. For example, radio uses terminology such as *urban contemporary, top 40,* and *contemporary hits,* which is not commonly employed in the music recording industry, despite the fact that radio is playing these recordings. For the most part, this entry focuses on music genre as used by the recording industry.

A second caveat is that genres that might be useful in describing the music of young children (e.g., bubble gum, television themes, musical nursery rhymes) have little utility when applied to adolescents and do not have widespread usage in the music industries. We focus on the more typical genre classifications that are employed across age levels.

A third limiting condition is that in postmodern society, in which the focus in media is on fragmentation of audiences, music is increasingly categorized into smaller subgenres. For example, reggae is frequently subdivided into ska, dub, reggaeton, ragga, and dancehall reggae. Such minute compartmentalization is useful primarily for marketing purposes (e.g., for so-called record clubs), but this entry does not take this microanalytical approach.

One final caveat: Much of the historical development of today's popular music forms has taken place from the mid-20th century onward. Prior to the development of rock music, popular music was largely limited to children's songs, such as "Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer," and a relatively anemic Top 20 composed of slow ballads, string orchestras, sing-along novelty songs, and sentimental music, typified by Dinah Shore's (1950) "Dear Hearts and Gentle

People." The emergence of rock and its many progeny created an explosion in popular music genres, skewing any discussion of the history of musical genres toward the modern era.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

The term *classical music* is somewhat problematic because it has at least three meanings. First, in restrictive usage, it refers to Western, especially European music of the classical music era, typically identified as the period from the mid-1700s through the first third of the 19th century. The musicians of this era contributed many enduring symphonies, string quartets, and sonatas. Haydn and Mozart are the prototypical composers of this period, and Beethoven served as the link between the classical and romantic periods. Second and in less restrictive usage, classical music includes Western music of the medieval, Renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, 20th century, and contemporary periods that is composed by professionally trained artists using music notation and usually performed faithfully to the score—again, by professionally trained artists. Because formal training and education typically are required to perform such music, it is often referred to as "serious" music. A third, less common, usage of the term *classical music* refers to the serious music of non-Western cultures, such as Chinese classical music (court music) or Indian classical music (marga).

For our purposes, the second, less restrictive meaning of classical music is most relevant. This music had its origins in the monophonic chant music of the early Christian era, which retained its essential form through the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, this music expanded to include motets and madrigals from England and the Netherlands, as well as the French chanson. During the late 16th century, Italian opera by composers such as Monteverdi became an important part of this tradition and was to dominate the early baroque period.

During the 17th century, classical music expanded to include keyboard suites, sonatas, organ music, and music for orchestras, including symphonies and concertos. Handel and Bach composed works for almost all of the musical genres of the high baroque period, and Bach contributed a corpus of liturgical music that remains a fixture in church music today.

In the rococo tradition of the early 18th century, a move toward simpler harmonies and a preponderance of instrumental music prevailed. Later in this century, the elegant, complex, classic style of Haydn and Mozart dominated. Along with Beethoven, their works helped define the mainstream tradition of Western classical music, featuring piano sonatas, string quartets, and symphonies.

The romantic era dominated the 19th century, with the symphony taking center stage. In addition, program music, grand opera, and character pieces for piano were prominently featured. Important romantic composers include Schubert, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, and Verdi. Wagner, in particular, influenced the musical establishment through his powerful operas. During the latter portion of this century, Mahler and Richard Strauss represented a continuation of prior traditions, whereas Schönberg exemplified the New Viennese School, Debussy and Ravel the French impressionist composers, and innovators like Bartók introduced folk elements into classical traditions.

Twentieth-century classical music evolved into many different foci, including expressionism (e.g., Berg), serialism (e.g., Boulez), neoclassicism (e.g., Stravinsky), electronic music (e.g., Stockhausen), minimalism (e.g., Glass), and aleatoric music (e.g., Cage). The eclecticism of 20th-century composers has been balanced somewhat by accelerated interest in composing fresh exemplars of earlier classic traditions (e.g., baroque, romantic), yielding great complexity to the portfolio of contemporary classical music.

GOSPEL

The gospel genre includes songs whose lyrics have strong religious, especially Christian emphases. Two major traditions exist in the American gospel tradition. In the Anglo-American Protestant tradition, gospel songs were spawned from revival meetings of the 1800s, especially those featuring singer Ira Sankey, who wrote, sang, and popularized such hymns as "Trusting Jesus" and "Under His Wings" in association with the evangelistic crusades of Dwight L. Moody. Others contributing to this stream of gospel included Fanny Crosby, whose sentimental poem songs expressed fervent, first-person joy over the anticipated blessings of heaven, and the mournful staples of George Bernard, such as "The Old Rugged Cross."

African American Protestants also contributed a major stream to American gospel music, often providing simple melodies sung in full voice, accompanied by shouts, moans, whispers, clapping, and stomping.

The first recorded song in this tradition was Thomas A. Dorsey's "If You See My Savior" (1926), but the rich sounds of Mahalia Jackson and the Soul Stirrers (including Sam Cooke) popularized this tradition in the 1940s and 1950s. Quartets and choirs provided energetic religious stimulation in this "black gospel music" tradition, which also provided considerable influence to the later popular sounds of Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, and Little Richard, among many others.

By the early 1980s, contemporary Christian music had replaced black gospel music as the most popular gospel style, and artists such as Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, and Sandi Patti thrived in this tradition and often crossed over into mainstream popular music. By the turn of the 21st century, praise and worship music was becoming an increasingly popular hybrid of gospel and was entering the Sunday services of many Protestant congregations.

JAZZ

Perhaps the most interdisciplinary genre of music with a uniquely American stamp is jazz, which developed from a cross-fertilization of ragtime, folk blues, American marching band music, the harmonic piano music of European composers such as Ravel and Debussy, Latin American dance music, and various African folk traditions, among other sources. Often called the first grassroots art form to develop in the United States, jazz is principally instrumental in nature and is a largely African American creation. Jazz has developed many subgenres, including Dixieland, swing/big band, bebop, free jazz, jazz-fusion, and smooth jazz.

The instruments most closely associated with jazz are the saxophone and trumpet, but also popular among jazz musicians are the trombone, piano, double bass, guitar, drums, clarinet, and banjo. The most distinctive feature of jazz is improvisation, and many jazz clubs continue to feature "improv" sessions, in which musicians spontaneously feed off of each other to develop original music and foster musical innovation.

Although most major U.S. cities have a jazz presence today, the roots of jazz are typically traced to the 1890s in New Orleans, where Dixieland was born. The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a group of white street musicians, cut the earliest jazz record in New Orleans in 1917. Soon black artists such as Freddie Keppard, King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, and others co-opted this tradition.

The 1920s witnessed major changes in the jazz scene. Louis Armstrong's soulful trumpet solos accompanied by his innovative scatting were joined by the swing pianists of the James P. Johnson school (e.g., Count Basie, Duke Ellington), who were joined in turn by the complex ensemble performances of Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers.

The 1930s saw major contributions to jazz from other locales, including Chicago, New York, Kansas City, and Memphis, with each city adding its own sound to the rapidly expanding and increasingly popular jazz genre. That decade also witnessed Benny Goodman's remarkable success with the big band sound, which opened the door for other dance bands (e.g., Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller), including bands with phenomenal vocalists (e.g., Artie Shaw with Billie Holiday, Chick Webb with Ella Fitzgerald).

During the 1940s, a reaction against the commercialization of big band jazz yielded way to the sound of bebop. Led by virtuosos such as Charlie "Bird" Parker on saxophone and Dizzy Gillespie on trumpet, jazz in this era become known for its fast tempos, innovative solo riffs, and wild chord progressions.

The 1950s saw the introduction of the cool style of West Coast jazz, with Gerry Mulligan (baritone sax), Chet Baker (trumpet), and Dave Brubeck (piano), among others. Meanwhile in the East, Cannonball Adderley, Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, and John Coltrane were taking funk to a new level with soul jazz. Simultaneously, the Modern Jazz Quartet and Thelonious Monk extended the life of bebop.

Free jazz was an important strain of the 1960s, with its attempt to replace jazz stereotypes with new inflections and procedures. Don Cherry, Cecil Taylor, and Miles Davis provided some of the important innovations in this tradition.

The latest trend in jazz is often called the fusion movement, or jazz fusion, as jazz discovered Latin, hard rock, bossa nova, and many other forms of modern music, to which it lent its own traditions and innovations. As always, the beauty of jazz is that as new traditions are formed, other artists take pride in maintaining all of the many heritage styles of jazz.

RHYTHM AND BLUES

Also known as R&B and rhythm 'n' blues, historically rhythm and blues has referred to forms of music that were neither jazz nor blues but rather were a more

lightweight form of popular black music. Nowadays, R&B is often used as a synonym for any contemporary black popular music.

Perhaps the most important thing about R&B is that it was vital in spawning other forms of music, such as rock and roll, doo-wop, funk, hip hop, and rap music. The combination of funk and soul music then fused into contemporary R&B, which has remained a popular urban music form into the 21st century.

ROCK AND ROLL

Like rock, rock and roll has become an umbrella term used to describe all popular music recorded since the early 1950s. However, in its early iteration, rock and roll was a type of American popular music that fused rhythm and blues with other sources. Pioneered by Chuck Berry, rock and roll rose in popularity through the captivating performances of Bill Haley, Buddy Holly, and Elvis Presley in the 1950s. Performed by black and white artists, rock and roll became the most successful form of American popular music for several years, plus it attracted a loyal following in Europe and throughout the world.

Essentially a form of rhythmicized blues, rock and roll typically featured amplified guitars, saxophones, and a prominent rhythm section of drums, piano, and bass, with the rhythm section typically giving intense emphasis to the first beat of each 4/4 bar. The tempo of this musical form was fast, and the texts were often concerned with sex, drugs, and rock and roll itself.

Rock and roll saw a rebirth in the 1960s with the popularity of the Twist, enhanced by the dynamic performances of Chuck Berry. The Beach Boys also contributed significantly to this renaissance, which influenced British groups, such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. For the most part, however, the main music scene moved from rock and roll to rock music.

ROCK

Whereas the roots of rock and roll are in the South, rock music was the child of California and was born during the turbulent 1960s. The Byrds in Los Angeles and the Charlatans, the Great Society, Quicksilver Message Service, and others from San Francisco popularized this music, although the Jefferson Airplane was the first of the Northern California rock bands to strike it big with the public and obtain a major recording contract.

Rock was electric, and so was its featured instrument, the electric guitar. The use of amplified and often distorted sounds from electric guitars characterized this form, which spawned numerous legendary guitarists. Live performances were a mainstay of rock, which appealed largely to white audiences whose members often were at odds with mainstream America, especially where drugs, sex, and work were concerned.

The Beatles borrowed heavily from this tradition and added to it, making rock an Anglo-American musical form. Leading performers included the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, the Who, the Doors, Jimi Hendrix, the Grateful Dead, and Janis Joplin. Typically, rock held little appeal for black audiences or for rural white audiences in America.

The mainstream media (recording, broadcast, and film especially) adopted rock and fed off of it, popularizing it, including rock's notorious counterculture festivals (e.g., Woodstock). This media affinity continued throughout the 1970s, with Bruce Springsteen, Kiss, the Eagles, ZZ Top, and many others becoming media darlings. During the 1980s, Music Television (MTV) offered rock videos around the clock, further popularizing the genre worldwide.

Rock spun off numerous other forms or subgenres, including jazz rock, art rock, folk rock, heavy metal, punk, and new wave. At the same time, the term *rock* became diluted and stood for almost all media-disseminated popular music during the 1970s and 1980s. However, in recent years, the term is once again reclaiming its more narrowly defined focus.

PUNK

Few music genres are more controversial than punk, and that is the way its early adherents would have liked it. The first wave of punk bands, such as the Sex Pistols, the Clash, and the Ramones, thrived on being perceived as underground musicians, yet they helped mold mainstream rock from the outside. Punk also fostered a homegrown philosophy, foreshadowing the grunge and garage band movements of later years, and they encouraged their audience members to learn to play instruments and create their own music. The simplicity of the music form also contributed to this grassroots music, which created many independent record labels and fan zines, because the mainstream media seemingly chose not to foster the genre.

Punk also generated several subgenres. These include new wave, hardcore punk, post punk, and alternative rock. Alternative rock became increasingly mainstream during the latter portion of the 20th century.

HIP HOP

Hip hop music is largely the child of rhythm and blues. The hip hop culture began among Puerto Rican and African American youth in the inner city of New York City (especially the Bronx) in the early 1970s, and several rap or hip hop groups began recording in the late 1970s and early 1980s. By the turn of the century, hip hop was a staple of American popular music and was regularly performed around the world.

Hip hop has two primary elements—rapping and so-called DJing (mixing, scratching)—along with two secondary elements—tagging (graffiti, as known as writing) and break dancing. Typically, hip hop involves a rapper (or a group of rappers) chanting their stories in an intensely rhythmic, lyrical form that relies heavily on rhyming, alliteration, and sounds effects (synthesized, sampled, or produced by mouth). The beat is an instrumental track provided by a DJ or instrumentalists.

Early successful hip hop artists were Afrika Bambaataa, Coke La Rock, Clark Kent, and Kool Herc & the Herculoids. Commercially successful artists include LL Cool J, DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince, MC Hammer, N.W.A., Dr. Dre, Ice-T, Run-D.M.C., Snoop Dogg, and Mary J. Blige.

Hip hop is much more than music. It represents the soul of American ghetto youth and their struggle for self-expression. Its manifestations in language, art, dress, and other areas played a major part in mainstream American culture in the late 20th century. Some of its components, such as gangsta rap, have also been lightning rods for public criticism.

REGGAE

With its roots in urban Jamaican popular music, reggae appeared in the mid-1960s as a synthesis of American R&B, traditional African and Jamaican folk music, and ska. In texture, reggae is characterized by its emphasis on offbeat rhythmic patterns and changed chorals. It is popular as dance music and is often seen as the voice of the Rastafarian movement.

Retaining its popularity rather consistently in Jamaica over the years, reggae has achieved some intermittent popularity in the United States and in England. It also played an important role in influencing other musical forms, including punk rock and hip hop. Major reggae artists include Toots and the Maytals, Bob Marley and the Wailers, and Black Uhuru.

COUNTRY MUSIC

Also called country and western or honky-tonk music, country music was derived largely from traditional oral music brought from the British Isles to colonial America, especially to the South. As early as the 1920s, “fiddling” music was being promoted by recording companies, and Victor recorded fiddlers Henry Gilliland and Eck Robertson in 1922. Often called hillbilly music, this early form of country music relied on old narrative British ballads as well as newer American ballads, which were accompanied by banjo, harmonica, and guitar—as well as fiddles, of course. Dancing, including square dancing and clogging, often accompanied this music.

Derivations of this early music were popularized by Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter family, whose less indigenous approaches made the music more accessible to those outside the Scots-Irish tradition. In addition, fusion with the Western swing movement, as well as additions from the largely underground bluegrass movement, further broadened the appeal of country music. By the mid-1930s, a mainstream style had emerged, adding more features of urban music. Roy Acuff was a key practitioner of this hybrid style, which developed many of the future texts of country music—the harsh realities of death, desertion, crime, thwarted love, alcoholism, crime, and the like.

Commercial radio stimulated the diffusion of this music when clear-channel stations like WSB in Atlanta and WSN in Nashville began to play country music for their large audiences. The popularity of these stations inspired WBAP in Forth Worth and WLS in Chicago to begin to play country music, which expanded its scope well beyond the South.

In the 1950s, country became even more popular by adding elements of rock and roll, with some parts of the genre transitioning into rockabilly music. Even more critically, the Nashville sound—a polished form of country music—with its backbone in the Grand Ole Opry, began churning out country songs for more mainstream audiences. The formation of the Country Music Association in Nashville in 1958 further expanded the scope and reach of this style of country

music, which was to reach prominence with artists like Kitty Wells, Hank Williams, Ray Price, George Jones, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Jim Reeves, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Barbara Mandrell, and many, many others.

By the turn of the century, country music had become a huge commercial phenomenon, with many country artists (e.g., Faith Hill, Shania Twain, Garth Brooks) routinely crossing over to mainstream popular musical forms. Other forms of country, such as bluegrass, remained more loyal to their roots and also became increasingly popular.

ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC

Music that makes creative use of electronic equipment—including producing, changing, or revising its basic properties—is often discussed under the generic rubric of *electro-acoustic music.* This includes many subgenres, including electronic music (which consists wholly or in part of sounds produced by synthesizers of other oscillators), computer music (music composed or generated digitally by computer), and *musique contrète* (the historical source of the electro-acoustic form in which sonic material is derived from recorded sound), and the like. Other popular categories of this genre include electronic dance music, space, new age, ambient, and electronica, which typically refers to electronic music without lyrics but is also a generic term for all electronic music.

Pioneers of this genre include Pierre Schaeffer, Herbert Eimert, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Robert Moog, Milton Babbitt, Mordon Mumma, John Cage, Lars Gunnar Bodin, Wendy Carlos, Tangerine Dream, Brian Eno, and Moby. Electronic music ranges in style from “elevator music” to *gabba* (Dutch hyper-techno).

OTHER MUSIC GENRES

It should be noted that numerous other forms of music, including some that are very popular, have not been discussed. Prominent among them are soul, salsa, disco, funk, world music, contemporary African music, and Latin music. All of these have major fan bases and contribute significantly to the cultural arts.

—Jennings Bryant

See also Hip Hop, Youth Culture and; Music Genres (various entries)

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MUSIC GENRES, POP/ROCK

Children have long mimicked their favorite rock and pop stars using hair brushes as microphones as they dance around to the radio, CDs, and MTV. As they reach adolescence, popular music becomes far more serious business, however. Ever since the mid-1950s when Elvis Presley gyrated on national television, and a few years later during the 1960s “British invasion,” when the Beatles rocked Shea Stadium, adolescents have considered pop and rock music their own—a sign of adulthood, sexuality, rebellion, fun, and solidarity. Whereas pop music is often viewed by teens as a softer, more commercially available (and parentally accepted) genre of music, rock music is seen as a harder, more rebellious style. The genres are different stylistically, but they are often lumped together under the heading of pop/rock. Usually played with electric guitar, bass, and drums and often sung by a vocalist, rock is known for its strong backbeats and rebellious attitude, even though it is made up of countless subgenres that may or may not adhere to this general formula. The genre of rock is rooted in blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, and boogie-woogie styles but also is influenced by traditional folk, gospel, and country music. While Elvis is considered by some to be the mainstreaming influence of rock and roll, others argue that Chuck Berry’s “Maybellene” and Bill Haley and the Comets’ “Rock Around the Clock” actually represent the first major commercial success of rock music on the radio and through vinyl records. The origin of the name of rock and roll is generally attributed to the rocking motion taken up by Southern gospel singers, which refers to the motion they used when caught up in spiritual rapture of their religious music.

Rock music has evolved and branched into numerous different subgenres over the years, including surf rock (which relies on fast-tempo electric guitars and is mostly instrumental), hard rock (which features more intricate guitar solos and soaring vocals), heavy

metal (which is generally a faster, guitar-and-bass heavier, louder form of hard rock), folk rock (which is often played with acoustic and electric instruments and is exemplified in the music of Bob Dylan), progressive rock (which is a complicated form of rock that often includes multiple keyboard instruments and musicians rooted in the classical tradition of playing), psychedelic rock (which is often inspired by psychedelic drugs of the 1960s and sometimes featured extensive solos based somewhat on jazz forms), garage rock (a very basic, pared-down rock that hearkens to the rock bands of the 1960s, such as The Animals), grunge (which almost always refers to the loud, grungy sounding guitar-based bands of the early 1990s, such as Nirvana and Pearl Jam), punk rock (which was stripped-down, three-chord rock without any slick production and which included an even more rebellious ethic than previous rock genres), alternative and indie rock (an enormous genre that first encompassed bands that simply would not receive play on mainstream radio but evolved into music that simply sounded different from and positioned itself as an alternative to classic rock), goth (which is music with dark themes that sounds somewhat like punk but is affiliated with a subculture in which its listeners dress in gothic-style clothing), emo (a combination of pop, punk, and rock that refers to *emotional* and means its musicians tend to sing more about love than violence), and many others. The subgenres of rock—which are too numerous to mention in this entry—continue to multiply as rock musicians create new sounds with different instruments and technologies.

Conversely, pop music is often perceived as more commercially successful and radio friendly (even though this is not necessarily the case), and soft rock music—and even mainstream rock music—is often categorized as pop music. In addition to being viewed as commercial music that relies primarily on vocal melodies and simple lyrics, pop music also uses many of the same conventions as rock, including electric guitars and bass, drums and vocals, and often keyboards and synthesizers and crosses over into the rock genre in many ways. Subgenres of pop may include rock, hip hop and rap (although these are generally a genre of their own), funk, disco, new wave (a more musically sophisticated offshoot of punk) techno, dance, and the more derogatory “bubblegum pop,” which refers to throw-away kinds of pop songs with strong hooks and little musical proficiency or lyrical meaning that are largely enjoyed by the bubblegum set, or young teens and children. In general, *pop* is sometimes considered a disparaging term because some critics believe that it stands for a betrayal of the defiant spirit of rock music and tends to rely on less skill and follows simpler musical conventions that are more marketable than rock. However, pop music does draw from the same roots and influences as rock, and the term pop has been used to describe the music of the most famous rock bands, including The Beatles, simply because the music is popular and melodious.

Today, popular pop and rock music is recognized for its economic power, particularly in relation to youth’s desire for it. Multinational entertainment conglomerates depend on children and adolescents to purchase music not only as a means of personal entertainment but as a matter of personal identity. MTV, a network launched in 1981, has built an empire on playing videos and programming related to music and youth culture. Much of this programming could be considered advertising. From the show, *TRL* (which stands for “total request live” but actually bases its top 10 videos of the day not on the largest number of requests but rather on how much MTV is playing the videos), to its reality programming, MTV sells viewers not only music but a particular lifestyle. This lifestyle still embodies the idea of rebellion and freedom found in rock music, but it also depends a certain amount on adolescents being positioned as powerful consumers of both popular culture and consumer goods.

—Shayla Thiel

See also Music, Rebelliousness and; Music Genres, Dance/House/Techno; Music Genres, Heavy Metal; Music Genres, Hip Hop; Music Genres, History of; Music Lyrics (various entries); Music Videos (various entries)

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MUSIC LISTENING, AGE EFFECTS ON

Age is an important consideration when discussing music listening because it is one of only two demographic characteristics that consistently predict audio exposure. Researchers who examine overall media use by children and adolescents have identified a distinct change in behavior at approximately 8 years old. This entry thus focuses on two developmental periods—children (ages 1 to 7) and older children and adolescents (ages 8 to 18).

YOUNG CHILDREN (AGES 1 TO 7)

The developmental stage of the young child dictates much of the music listening experience. Infants as young as 5 months show signs of recognizing and learning rhythmic patterns and sequential relationships between sounds. Recognition of pitch develops later. However, those reactions are most likely responses to changes in the aural environment as the infants differentiate the music from other nonmusical sounds like speech. Such discriminating listening is further refined to the point where preschoolers increasingly connect musical sounds with emotions, such as associating major mode to happiness and minor mode to sadness.

Research suggests that children begin to develop musical taste around the age of 5. That is, they exhibit greater reactions to the rhythmic and tonal characteristics of music. By the age of 5, children favor harmonious over dissonant, tonal over atonal, and metrical over nonmetrical music. However, as they grow, the disparity in their reactions to the extremes (e.g., tonal versus atonal) increases such that 10-year-olds are much more accepting of music that is harmonious, tonal, and metrical. The changes in taste observed in children between ages 4 and 10 are commonly attributed to the combination of acculturation and psychological development during this period. Of course, parental involvement is a prime source of acculturation. More than half of parents of young children report singing or playing music for them each day. However, the frequency of music play decreases for toddlers and for second children as compared to first children.

Children between the ages of 2 and 7 listen to music about 45 minutes per day. At this age, the research suggests they spend a little more time with radio than other sources. Children are four times more likely to listen to children's music and programming than Christian, classical, Top 40, or country and western music genres, each of which is heard by about 10% of children. By the age of 6, children are focusing more attention on popular music and start recognizing and forming opinions about the hit songs of the day. The interest in popular music grows steadily, and their openness to music decreases as they reach adolescence.

OLDER CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (AGES 8 TO 18)

Development and Exposure

Music is frequently cited as the most important media for adolescents due in part to their physiological and psychological development. Around the age of 8, children begin developing a greater sense of independence, and they enter a period of transition away from parental guidance toward self-determination. This transition is accompanied by changes in adolescents' media exposure. Researchers have observed an increase in audio use between the ages of 8 and 18 while other media use (e.g., television) declines, particularly during the mid-teen years. Between the ages of 13 and 18, the typical adolescent spends more than 10,000 hours listening to music. On any given day, 85% of U.S. children between 8 and 18 years old listen to at least a few minutes of audio media (primarily music), and more than 40% of those children spend more than an hour and a half listening each day. Most adolescents are spending that time with popular music.

Popular music is widely recognized as being made by young people for young people. The combination of youthful performers and salient subjects and messages is accepted as one explanation for adolescents' tremendous pop music interest. There are many genres of popular music today, and adolescents frequently report listening to more than one genre. However, a couple of genres are clearly favored. Rap/hip hop and alternative rock are the most popular, although listening patterns differ based on ethnicity and gender. More than half the adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 listen to some rap/hip hop music on a typical day. About half listen to alternative rock.

Context

The social context in which music is heard has been shown to interact with the genre of the music to yield different listening experiences. For example,

listening to hard rock or heavy metal among friends has a positive effect while listening to those genres among family members leads to a negative effect.

The majority of adolescent music listening occurs in solitary or personal situations to supplement activities such as reading, studying, and talking on the phone. Preteens (10 to 12 years old) spend less than half of their active listening time alone. That amount increases substantially in the teen years when they are likely to spend nearly three quarters of their active listening time alone. Much of the solitary listening occurs in the bedroom because it is seen as a refuge for self-exploration and dealing with stress and negative emotions. Music plays a role in mood management by eliciting desired affective states. Music can be a source of inspiration and arousal during times of low self-esteem or can provide an environment for exploring feelings of sadness. Music also can provide companionship or a sense of connectedness in moments of loneliness. In social contexts like dances and parties, music stimulates or excites positive moods. This use is obvious when one imagines dances, but it holds true when listening to sad music with close friends because the listening creates a shared experience and connectedness between friends.

—William Kinnally

See also Music, Group Identity and; Music Genres (various entries); Music Listening, Gender Effects on

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MUSIC LISTENING, GENDER EFFECTS ON

Adolescence is a time of identity development, specifically with regard to sexuality and gender, and adolescents spend an enormous amount of time listening to popular music and music videos. Music is also of high importance for "tweens" (roughly ages 9-to-12-years-old), who are at an age when many are in their first more serious romantic relationship. Because popular music contains many portrayals of gender roles and gender-typed behavior, often related to sexuality and romantic relationships, music exposure during these life phases most likely affects gender roles and related behavior. This connection may actually be the reason why music is preoccupied with romance and sexuality and thus with gender roles, and why teens and tweens listen to music so frequently. Concerns about the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and about too much emphasis on sexuality have often been voiced. This entry examines gender-related music content, music preferences, and the effects of music listening.

GENDER PORTRAYALS IN MUSIC LYRICS AND VIDEOS

Portrayals of gender roles have always been common in popular music. The first systematic analyses of lyrics focused on the then-dominant portrayals of love and courtship. Although, in the 1960s, a shift occurred in popular music to less emphasis on love and romance, the physical aspects of love gained more importance over time (Knobloch-Westerwick, Musto, and Shaw provide an up-to-date overview of these developments). Content analyses of popular music lyrics are fairly rare, but some have examined depictions of gender roles. For female role stereotypes specifically, Cooper found that 96% of the sampled songs from the 1940s to 1970s contained such stereotyping. The importance of stereotyping aspects changed; for example, females' physical characteristics were mentioned significantly more often in each successive decade of the four that were examined.

Several studies investigated gender stereotyping in music videos and found gender-typed portrayals across the board. Findings showed that males and females are victims of aggression with equivalent frequency, but black males are more than three times as likely to be

aggressors, and white females are most frequently victims. The authors have suggested that music videos may reinforce false stereotypes of aggressive black males and victimized white females. Other work showed that men appear nearly twice as often as women, and men engage in significantly more aggressive and dominant behavior; women, on the other hand, engage in significantly more implicitly sexual and subservient behavior and are more frequently the object of explicit, implicit, and aggressive sexual advances. An analysis of characters' behaviors in music videos concluded that males are depicted as more adventuresome and aggressive than females, whereas females appear more affectionate and fearful than males. It was also found that many female characters wear revealing clothing and that they initiate and receive sexual advances more often than males.

GENDER-TYPED MUSIC USES AND PREFERENCES

Listeners' gender has been found to be of critical importance for individual reactions to popular music. For example, in a study by Toney and Weaver, males showed the strongest positive reactions toward hard-rock videos whereas females liked soft-rock music videos the most. Christenson and Peterson found that young females expressed a higher preference for mainstream pop, disco, R&B, soul, and gospel than males, whereas males favored various kinds of rock and blues. Boys and girls also differ in the ways they use music to regulate mood. Research suggests that girls more often use music to control and improve mood, to overcome loneliness, to pass time, and to set a tone with others.

Gender is also important in how teens and tweens perceive peers in connection with music preferences. Research indicates that expressing gender-typed musical tastes may create a favorable impression on adolescent and young adult age peers. For example, Zillmann and Bhatia reported that young men found a young woman more attractive as a potential date if she was said to like classical music whereas young women found a depicted man more attractive if he appeared to like heavy metal music.

MUSIC EFFECTS ON THE GENDERS

Music listening has been shown to have both short- and long-term effects on gender-related perceptions. The former can be explained with priming, the latter with cultivation theory.

For the short-term priming effects, exposure to stereotypical music videos can alter viewers' impressions of people observed in similar contexts, often making neutral behavior appear more sexualized and making actions that fit stereotypical gender schemas seem more favorable. For example, music with sexually explicit lyrics has been shown to prime sexual appeal as an evaluative criterion in peers of the opposite sex. In other words, when young people get together and meet others of the same age, while being exposed to sexually laden lyrics of popular music, they are more likely to judge a potential partner merely based on physical appearance and sexual desirability.

Cultivation effects of music exposure emerged in survey findings showing that higher amounts of music video viewing was associated with more traditional gender role attitudes and with assignment of greater importance to specific stereotypical attributes. It has also been reported that frequent music video use was linked to stronger acceptance of women as sexual objects.

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The evidence that listening to popular music reinforces gender stereotypes and primes sexuality as important is fairly clear and unequivocal. Yet, any possible actions based on these findings face the challenge of how to maintain free speech interests and still curtail potentially harmful music content. The Parents Music Resource Center's opposition to the use of violence, drugs, and sex in music has resulted in warning labels on CDs. The identification and classification of content related to gender stereotypes, however, may be more difficult to justify. Nonetheless, this debate will certainly continue, given recent trends such as extreme gender stereotypes in hip hop music portraying women as sexual objects.

—Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick

See also Gender, Media Use and; Gender Identity Development; Gender Roles in Music; Hip Hop, Portrayals of Women in; Music, Personal Identity and; Music Listening, Uses of; Music Lyrics, Music Television and

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MUSIC LISTENING, IMPACT OF

Since the early 20th century, various sectors of society have expressed concerns about the effects of exposure to popular music on children and young adults. More recently, research has addressed the effects on young people of listening to a variety of music genres, especially heavy metal and hip hop. Such research has examined the effects of music listening on attitudes toward women and girls, attitudes toward racial stereotyping, general aggression, and other personality traits. Models using priming theory and information processing theory are among the explanations offered for such effects.

Beginning with jazz and blues in the 1920s, and then moving to rock and roll in the 1950s, commentary about the effects of secular music on attitudes, thoughts, and behavior have appeared in both major and local newspapers, as well as periodicals. In particular, some parents, politicians, school officials, and clergy have charged that such music fosters negative attitudes about women and girls, incites violence, and promotes drug use and reckless sexual behavior. For example, in a *Washington Post* article on January 29, 1922, the Chicago school superintendent describes jazz music as an evil force that corrupts dancing and decreases respect for womanhood.

Beginning in the 1980s, however, the genres of metal and hip hop music, particularly the subgenres of death metal and gangsta/pimp rap, have drawn even greater ire from these groups. In addition to the aforementioned concerns, some people have criticized both genres for being nihilistic and homophobic. In addition, some citizens have assailed metal music for celebrating what they perceive as Satanism and occultism, while condemning some types of political rap music for promoting militancy or racial separatism. An extreme example of public disapproval for these genres is exemplified by former U.S. Senator Robert Dole's attack on the film and music industries in 1995 for marketing what he described as "nightmares of depravity" to American citizens. Dole singled out rap music and media giant Time Warner, which had previously distributed the song "Cop Killer," which was recorded by rapper Ice-T's speed metal band, Body Count. Thus, concerns about the deleterious effects of rap, rock, and metal music provide the impetus for most of the research on the effects of listening to popular music.

Ethical concerns about exposing children and adolescents to sexual, violent, and other controversial content in popular music genres, such as rap, rock, and metal, have limited research on effects of popular music primarily to college students and other young adults. Thus, only two published studies have investigated the effects of popular music on adolescents, and both of them involve research by Johnson and various colleagues on the effects of exposure to rap music videos. One study concerned violent themes, whereas

the other entailed the depiction of young women in sexually subordinate roles.

Most of the research on popular music deals with the effects of viewing music videos, rather than listening to music without visual accompaniment. However, although such studies greatly contribute to the literature, they do not reveal information about the effects of exposure to violent lyrics without video. In fact, such studies actually confound or make it difficult to tease apart the roles that visual and aural content play in any observed effects. Thus, research on the effects of music listening would be quite valuable.

Although there is a dearth of experimental research on popular music, particularly regarding effects on adolescents, some survey research lends support to the findings of these studies. Collectively, they provide evidence that both refute and confirm some commonly held beliefs about the effects of listening to various types of popular music. In addition, these studies offer insight into factors that mitigate the negative effects of aural music exposure.

LINKS BETWEEN MUSIC PREFERENCES, PERSONALITY STYLE, AND ATTITUDES

Recent survey research has explored associations between preferences for various music genres, dispositions, and attitudes. In particular, these researchers were interested in associations between music that some people consider rebellious or aggressive and personal attitudes and behavior. Because these researchers took different approaches to defining various music genres, the findings are mixed. Nevertheless, there is some overlap. In a 2003 study, Schwartz and Fouts found that adolescents who preferred "heavy" music (such as the metal, rock, and rap genres) tended to be independent, anticonformist, and aggressive and more likely to question other people's rules, motives, and abilities, compared to teenagers who prefer "lighter" music, such as pop, teen pop, and dance music. In addition, they found that those who preferred heavy music demonstrated lower self-esteem and higher self-doubt than did those who preferred lighter music.

These findings are consistent with earlier research, which suggests that adolescents use music as both a learning tool and a way of constructing their identity. According to Berry, children whose academic performance is poor tend not to identify with school, and they seek alternative ways to "fit in" and increase their self-esteem, such as immersing themselves in alternative music cultures. Such cultures supply an identity replete with fashion, hairstyles, language, and ideology. Nonspecific to academic performance, however, Larson and Kubey found that music, more than other media, elicits more motivation and excitement from adolescents in general and more emotional involvement from girls in particular, as it addresses their concerns about sexuality, individualization, and autonomy.

With respect to light music, Schwartz and Fouts found that adolescents who preferred such music experienced greater difficulty with their developing sexuality and with reconciling childhood beliefs with new sexual impulses than both heavy and eclectic music listeners. Furthermore, light-music listeners were more preoccupied with fitting in and being accepted by their peers, as well as with following rules and being responsible people than these other types of listeners. Teenagers who had eclectic music tastes, on the other hand, experienced less difficulty negotiating their adolescence than either light or heavy music listeners. This suggests that they flexibly use music to alter, reflect, or validate their moods. However, it is unknown whether musical eclecticism facilitates adolescent adjustment or whether well-adjusted adolescents simply have eclectic tastes.

In other research on college students, one study grouped heavy metal music with rock and alternative, which the authors labeled "intense and rebellious." They found an association between preference for heavy metal and self-perceived intelligence and verbal ability, openness to new experiences, athleticism, physical attractiveness, and risk taking, whereas another study found that heavy metal listeners were more aggressive and expressed less regard for women. With respect to rap music, the former study grouped this style of music with soul and electronica (labeled "energetic and rhythmic"). They found that people who listen to such music tend to be extroverted, agreeable, liberal, and athletic and to perceive themselves as attractive. Similar to the findings of the other study, rap music listeners were more aggressive and distrusting than people who did not listen to rap music; however, rap listeners also exhibited greater self-esteem.

Survey research is quite useful in terms of linking attitudes and personality types with music preferences, but this method does not allow one to determine whether the music preferences influence attitudes and personality or vice versa. A recent quasi-experimental

study, however, sheds some light on these mixed findings. In addition to the problems that arise when researchers take different approaches to defining or classifying music genres, Carpentier, Knobloch, and Zillmann argued that self-report measures of music preference are problematic because youths often use music to establish or maintain a self-image or peer-group membership.

Thus, they assessed various personality traits of a group of college students and then allowed them to selectively expose themselves to defiant rock and rap songs, nondefiant rock and rap songs, or no music at all. Defining proactive rebellion as the active pursuit of activities solely to elicit excitement, they found that respondents who expressed higher levels of this trait listened to more defiant music than their counterparts. Similarly, when they combined proactive and reactive (unpremeditated retaliation or aggression to a situation such as arguing with an authority figure who yells at you) measures of rebellion to create a single assessment of "negative dominance," they found that participants who scored lower on this trait listened to defiant music for a much shorter period than their counterparts. Furthermore, they found that a higher level of disinhibition (such as preferring wild parties) was associated with liking defiant music, whereas hostility was not. Consequently, Carpentier, Knobloch, and Zillmann concluded that the rebellion associated with a preference for defiant music, which induces impulsive and sometimes antisocial feelings and behaviors, is inspired by a quest for freedom rather than being induced by anger.

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTS OF MUSIC EXPOSURE

Attitudes Toward Women and Girls

Only a handful of true experiments have been conducted on the effects of popular music listening, and they have primarily addressed concerns about sexual aggression and other negative attitudes and behaviors toward women and girls. In one such study, St. Lawrence and Joyner explored the effects on male college students of sexually violent heavy metal rock, Christian heavy metal rock, and classical music. They found that regardless of the lyrical content, young men who were exposed to either type of metal/rock music held more stereotypic and negative attitudes toward women than young men who listened to classical music. Unexpectedly, they also found that men who were exposed to classical music reported greater levels of sexual arousal than men who listened to either type of metal/rock music.

Two other studies investigated the effects of exposure to misogynous or sexually violent rap music on relatively small samples of predominantly white male college students. In one study, Barongan and Hall examined whether—following exposure to either misogynous or nonviolent rap music—participants would choose to expose a young woman to a sexually violent movie clip (containing a rape scene), a clip depicting nonsexual aggression toward a woman, or one showing a pleasant conversation between a man and woman. They found that few participants in either music condition showed the sexually violent clip. However, men who listened to music that demeaned women were more likely to show the clip that depicted aggression against women than men who listened to nonviolent rap music.

In the other study, Wester, Crown, Quatman, and Heesacker explored the effects of gangsta rap music on participants who were unfamiliar with the gangsta rap subculture. They found that exposure to such lyrics led men to view their relationships with women as more adversarial or as a competitive sport in which they must prevail, compared with men who did not listen to gangsta rap lyrics. In addition, people who hold adversarial beliefs about relationships generally perceive members of the opposite sex as untrustworthy. When the music itself was presented without lyrics, there were no effects on participants' attitudes toward women.

Attitudes Toward Racial Stereotyping

Regarding the effects of popular music on attitudes about racial stereotyping, Johnson, Trawalter, and Dovidio investigated the effects of exposure to violent rap songs by male artists. They concluded that exposure to such music can have negative implications for African Americans and that these effects occur for both black and white evaluators. Regarding judgments about aggression, respondents reacted to a story about a young black or white man who drank beer and then behaved aggressively after discovering that his fiancée broke off their engagement to date his best friend. Both blacks and whites attributed the black man's behavior to an enduring negative disposition or personality, rather than to situational factors such as feelings of hurt and betrayal, more often than they did

with the white man's behavior. However, white participants were more likely than blacks to attribute the black man's behavior to disposition.

With respect to perceptions of intelligence, when asked to evaluate an applicant for a managerial position at a microchip manufacturing company, researchers found that exposure to violent rap music caused whites to perceive the black job applicant as less qualified than the white applicant. The final step in this overall study involved evaluations of a male applicant for an aircraft pilot position, which required strong "spatial skills." Unlike intelligence and aggression, this characteristic has been absent from cultural racial stereotypes. Thus, as expected, researchers found that exposure to violent rap music did not interact with race of the applicant and respondent to influence judgments. Interestingly, however, black participants perceived the black applicant to be more qualified than the white applicant, whereas white participants perceived the applicants to be equally qualified. Supporting these findings, Rudman and Lee found that after listening to violent and misogynist rap music, people evaluated a black target less favorably than a white target.

General Aggression

In terms of general aggression, Anderson, Carnagay, and Eubanks conducted five experiments to demonstrate that exposure to violent rock songs affects aggressive thoughts in three different ways. Such songs caused young adult listeners to interpret ambiguously aggressive words (such as *rock* or *stick*) as aggressive and increased the speed with which they pronounced aggressive (compared to nonaggressive) words. In addition, men pronounced aggressive words faster than women. Last, violent songs increased the proportion of aggressive words that listeners completed.

COGNITION AND MUSIC EFFECTS

The Priming Process

Studies of effects of popular music most often use priming theory to explain the process by which exposure to various types of music exerts its effect. Priming refers to the increased accessibility or reactivation of cognitive pictures and thoughts (known as schemas) immediately following exposure to a stimulus. Of course, in order for a stimulus to reactivate thoughts, those thoughts must have been previously stored in memory following exposure to some event. Thus, researchers have proposed network models that involve memory nodes in the brain to explain how various stimuli (such as music) are capable of influencing our thoughts and feelings. Nodes refer to clusters of associated concepts that are located in memory. However, unlike parts of the brain that are concrete or visible, either through visual examination or technology, such as the cerebrum or pituitary gland, one cannot physically locate these nodes in the brain. Thus, memory nodes represent an abstract yet descriptive concept.

According to Berkowitz, activated thoughts radiate outward from a particular node along the associative pathways of other nodes and remain activated at the node for a brief period, enabling activation of other related thoughts and feelings. Bargh found that priming may chronically or temporarily increase accessibility of information that pertains to a particular target, either consciously or automatically (beneath the threshold of awareness); this information is then capable of affecting subsequent judgments and behaviors. A useful way of thinking of this may be to envision the music or other stimulus as a flame and the brain as a large branch containing smaller limbs, which represent different types of emotions, thoughts, or memories. If the main branch is set afire, then the flame will travel to the smaller limbs and spark a variety of pictures, thoughts, and feelings. The initial fire will die out, but if the branch is exposed to flame repeatedly, the fire may travel to other parts of the tree or surrounding forest and create lasting changes to the landscape.

Regarding stereotype activation, Johnson et al. used stereotype priming, as distinguished from category priming, to explain how exposure to stereotypes about black people affects both interracial (between members of different races) and intraracial (between members of the same race) perceptions. According to Lepore and Brown, category priming occurs only when a particular category is cued in the absence of any stereotypic characteristics. For example, the category *rapper,* which may be primed by a visual image of a young African American wearing trendy urban attire (i.e., extremely baggy or "sagging" pants), might be sufficient to adversely affect judgments about black people. Stereotype priming, on the other hand, involves the direct cueing of stereotypic characteristics, such as a rapper whose discourse is hypersexual, violent, and materialistic, with or without the category label. Moreover, Lepore and Brown have found that the activation of stereotypes does not vary

as a function of level of prejudice because priming one aspect of a cultural stereotype activates other stereotypic associations.

These findings support Devine's early research demonstrating the role of culture in the maintenance of stereotypes. She found that although participants with lower levels of prejudice expressed fewer racially pejorative thoughts about blacks, they were equally knowledgeable about existing stereotypes about that group by virtue of their participation in the larger culture. Thus, with respect to effects of exposure to violent and sexist music, although whites and men may express more stereotypical beliefs about blacks and women, respectively, these latter groups are likely to be aware of such stereotypes within American culture.

Information Processing Theory

Another useful tool for explaining the effects of listening to popular music is Huesmann's information processing model, which extends Berkowitz's neoassociationist model as well as Bandura's model of observational learning. Berkowitz emphasized the importance of situational cues or primers, whereas Bandura underscored the governing of social behavior by internal self-regulating processes and the role of direct reinforcements (i.e., rewards and punishments). Huesmann's model focuses first on cognitive scripts and then on their acquisition and retrieval from memory.

According to the Huesmann model, people employ a heuristic search process to retrieve a script from memory that is appropriate for the situation. In addition, this model highlights the role of normative beliefs or internalized prescriptions regarding the appropriateness of behavior, beliefs that serve to regulate or justify behavior. Huesmann argues that both scripts and normative beliefs are learned via a combination of observational learning, cognitive rehearsal of the observed material, and physically enacting behaviors (instrumental learning).

Common examples of scripts are the "boy meets girl" or "schoolyard bully picks on unpopular kid" scenarios, which are ubiquitous in media. In addition, many children and adults may draw from personal experiences. These experiences involve tactics that either worked or failed to achieve results in a situation, as well as rewards or punishments. For example, if a boy successfully gets a date by lying or presenting himself in an otherwise false manner, then he may continue such behavior. Thus, listening to violent or sexual music, particularly over an extended period, may influence attitudes toward particular groups (e.g., girls or African Americans), and these attitudes serve as scripts for future behavior.

—Angie Colette Beatty

See also Cognitive Script Theory; Media Effects, Models of; Music Genres, Heavy Metal; Music Genres, Hip Hop; Music Listening, Problem Behavior and; Priming Theory

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MUSIC LISTENING, PROBLEM BEHAVIOR AND

Throughout history and across cultures, music has been part of celebratory and religious gatherings and ceremonies. Due to music's power to provide an appropriate auditory context for festive and solemn events, as well as its ability to enhance moods and to comfort, great potency is attributed to this medium. In weighing music's power, some philosophers, religious leaders, and educators have stressed that music listening not only may have positive consequences but also is also a potentially dangerous medium. For instance, Greek philosopher Plato (428–ca. 347 BC) argued that music teaching was an essential part of education but that music in the soft and sorrowful Lydian mode—one of four major modes established by the Greeks—would feminize men and was even unfit to be listened to by women. The complaint that music consumption may induce or aggravate problems has survived into the present day and was most prominently heard when popular music found a mass audience in the second quarter of the 20th century. In the 1920s, jazz music, and more specifically the Charleston dance craze, was seen as an incentive to immoral behavior, leading to all kinds of social illnesses from female smoking to premarital sex and alcohol and drug abuse. The development of modern pop music since the mid-1950s has led to claims that some artists and some genres are a real threat to youth. Pop music listening has been associated with the development of a wide array of problem behaviors ranging from devil worship, suicide, and depression to substance misuse, aggression, and delinquency. In public debates throughout the 20th century, certain critics have described some types of music as possessing the power to induce violence, drug abuse, and self-harm and to undermine sexual morals and accepted religious notions. However, although correlations have been found between music preferences and problem behavior among adolescents, the issue of causality remains problematic.

CLAIMS ABOUT THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF POP MUSIC

Young people use pop music to choose their fashion styles, to sharpen their worldview, and to define their identity. For most young people, pop music is an important medium, and many model themselves to some extent on examples provided by pop stars and their ideas. Consequently, it has been suggested that pop and rock music may have negative effects on behavior as well. For instance, in the 1950s, rock and roll's meteoric ascent led conservative white critics to conclude that racial boundaries would be blurred by this "Negro" music reaching a mass white audience.

Even though its greatest star of the period, Elvis Presley, was white (and had to be, perhaps, in order to achieve his level of fame during that period), an old fear of the sensual and explicit nature of black music's rock and roll roots surfaced, and Elvis's suggestive pelvic movements were interpreted as provoking a decline in sexual morals. In his third appearance on the nationally broadcast *The Ed Sullivan Show* on January 6, 1957, Elvis was shown only from the waist up, so as not to offend conservative viewers.

In the 1960s, many pop musicians were the most prominent heralds of a new ideology implying fundamental changes in the ethics of work, leisure, sexuality, substance use, and religion. They were often accused of being a threat to society. To illustrate how fast the times were changing, John Lennon casually mentioned that in 1966, the name *Beatles* had meaning for more people on this planet than the name *Jesus.* This led to severe criticism by U.S. religious organizations and to the public burning of Beatles' records in some American cities. Music seemed to be at the heart of a cultural war. Pop stars and other advocates of a liberal youth culture propagating anti-bourgeois, anti-materialist and pro-drug and pro-sex attitudes battled conservative standard bearers who feared the corruption of the young and the end of civilization.

In the eighties and nineties, two genres in particular have been criticized for their potential danger to young people. Organizations such as the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) believe that heavy metal and rap (hip hop) corrode sexual morals and encourage violence and drug use with their obscene and brutal lyrics. Some religiously inspired critics have even asserted that some rock records contain secret satanic messages only clearly discernable when they are played backward. Although never supported by scientific research, these claims of *backward masking* made it to U.S. courts, where heavy metal bands such as Judas Priest and Ozzy Osbourne had to defend themselves against claims that their music and its supposedly hidden messages drove fans to violent and suicidal acts.

As recently as 1999, the music of self-proclaimed anti-Christ superstar Marilyn Manson has been pinpointed as contributing to the mind-set of two young people who shot 12 students and a teacher at their high school in Columbine, Colorado, on April 20, 1999. Rapper Ice-T ("Cop Killer," 1992), and fellow rappers of Niggers With Attitude (N.W.A.; "Fuck Tha Police," 1992) were accused of provoking violence against the police in their compositions. Generally, the genre of gangsta rap has been criticized for its sensationalized portrayal of romance and sex and its glamorizing of drug use, violence, and delinquency.

EFFECTS OF MUSIC ON PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Research on the links between adolescent cultural-style preferences and their adjustment suggests that preferences for heavy metal and hip hop may indeed be associated with a range of problem behaviors. Studies in English-speaking countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia have disclosed a set of attitudes and externalizing problem behaviors that have been labeled "the heavy metal syndrome." Heavy metal fans tend to have a more problematic relation to school: They receive lower grades, and they have higher truancy and dropout rates. They experiment with alcohol and drugs at an earlier age and may continue to use and abuse these substances more frequently than their peers who disdain their musical choice. Heavy metal fans are more often involved in reckless, rule-violating, and risky sexual behavior. They report high-speed driving, driving while intoxicated, and having unsafe sex more frequently. Male heavy metal fans may hold relatively hostile attitudes toward other people more often and show more violence and delinquency in general. Several other studies performed in these same countries found that rap fans, compared to nonfans, also often exhibit more externalizing problem behaviors, such as drug use, engagement in unsafe sex, aggression, and delinquency. A fascination for the louder and brasher forms of rap music may increase the tolerance for violence, boost sexist attitudes, and divert educational drive. Dwelling in a symbolic universe glorifying pimplike hustlers may have the effect of a decrease in academic aspirations.

Other empirical studies have found that a preference for heavy metal is also associated with more internalizing problems. For instance, Canadian females who like heavy metal music are characterized by more depression, deliberate self-harm, and suicidal thoughts than mainstream-oriented girls. Both female and male U.S. heavy metal fans show higher levels of suicide ideation. While metal fans seem prone to more externalizing and internalizing distress, rap fans do not seem to display these types of problems as much. In a Dutch study, no elevated levels of depression, anxiety, or self-harm were found among fans of urban music (rap or R&B).

THE ISSUE OF CAUSALITY

Although associations have been found between metal or rap preference and problem behavior, most researchers stress that the results of these studies must be interpreted cautiously. If associations are found, they are weak, indicating that for most fans, even music that is labeled deviant is simply fun to listen to, contributes to a good mood, and may decrease problems.

Furthermore, although research provides evidence for some associations between music listening and problem behavior, music may not be a factor that independently contributes to problem behavior. For instance, heavy metal fans in the United States are more likely to report nonsupportive families and a marginal social position. They are more frequently on poor terms with their parents and dislike or oppose basic social institutions such as school and church or society in general. Heavy metal fans' social positioning may at least partially explain the link between their music preference and their emotional distress and problem behavior. In most studies, the link between a preference for heavy metal and problem behavior risk disappears or substantially decreases with controls for other risk factors, such as a strained relationship with parents, feelings of alienation in terms of self-estrangement or powerlessness, and an inclination to sensation seeking and drug use. This may imply that adolescents who already experience problems or have a certain psychological makeup seek music that, to a certain extent, reflects these problems or their personality. Thus, preferences for certain genres of music have been linked to problem behavior, but research has failed to settle the issue of causality; that is, it is still unclear whether music listening causes problems or people who are in some way troubled listen to certain kinds of music.

Several processes have been proposed in discussions about mechanisms behind the associations between music and problem behavior. One line of reasoning is that adolescents' music preferences influence their behaviors: Depressive or antisocial content in music activates antisocial or depressing cognitive schemas, which may in turn lead to actual antisocial behavior or depression. Second, youngsters may imitate the perceived lifestyle characteristics attributed to the music or artists with which they identify. Third, if adolescents are actual members of a clique (i.e., friendship group) holding certain music preferences, they may conform to acceptable group norms, and if these are deviant, they may engage in substance use and risky or rule-violating behavior themselves. Fourth, the desire to become affiliated with a certain musical/youth cultural style may guide adolescents toward deviant behaviors.

Other authors have downplayed music's effects and conceptualized music preferences as a mediator between personality characteristics and adolescent externalizing behavior. Children with prominent traits such as sensation seeking or rebelliousness may, at the start of adolescence, seek music styles and youth cultural affiliations that reflect their activity level, curiosity, and need for arousal. High-energy music and associated youth cultures geared to adventurousness and excitement can attract these young people disproportionably. Basic personal characteristics, later cultural preferences, and membership in peer groups that occasionally break social rules to seek stimulation may result in (collective) externalizing behavior in the future path of adolescent development. In this model of a developmental sequence, music and youth cultures function as a bridge between personality and relatively prevalent risky and rule-violating behaviors that are specific to middle and late adolescence.

SELECTIVE PUBLIC OUTCRIES

Certain exuberant genres that are popular among young audiences, such as Charleston-style jazz, rock and roll, metal, and rap, have attracted a disproportionate amount of public attention because of their supposed danger in spoiling the young. Other music genres, more popular among adults, are also potentially linked to problem behavior but have attracted far less attention. For instance, studies have shown that a preference for country music is correlated with an increased risk for alcohol abuse and depression, and opera aficionados more often think of suicide as a definite cure for problems. Public indignation over music's negative influences is a selective process, particularly when referring to teenage music, and it is heavily subject to stereotyping. Over the past two decades, the public debate in the United States has framed heavy metal as harmful to children, and rap music has been marked as a threat to the community, but never a cry was heard for a ban of genres such as country and opera.

—Tom ter Vogt and Stephen Soitos

See also Aggression Music and; Depression, Media Use and; Hip Hop, Violence in; Media Effects, Models of; Music Genres, Heavy Metal

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MUSIC LISTENING, USES OF

Researchers who examine adolescents' use of music generally focus their attention on audio sources such as CDs, tapes, MP3 files, and radio. Although these sources can be used for nonmusic content such as books and news, adolescents overwhelmingly favor them for listening to music. Most discussions of adolescents' music use address five basic areas of interest: household availability of playback devices, time spent listening to audio media, the contexts in which adolescents listen, preferred music styles, and the motives for listening.

HOUSEHOLD AVAILABILITY

Music sources are extremely common in the houses of adolescents throughout the United States. The typical child between the ages of 8 and 18 is likely to live in a house with three CD/tape players and three radios. About 97% of children in that age range live in a home with at least one radio, and 98% have at least one CD/tape player in their home. Furthermore, more than 80% of U.S. adolescents report having one radio and/or CD/tape player in their bedroom. Adolescents also value the portability of music players. As of 2004, 61% owned a portable CD player, and 18% owned an MP3 player. Interestingly, adolescents' access to audio media differs from other media in that there are no significant differences in access related to age, ethnicity, race, or parent education and income. However, the amount of time children spend with music is not uniform across age, gender, or racial characteristics. As children age, the amount of time spent listening to music increases.

TIME SPENT LISTENING

On any given day, 85% of U.S. children between 8 and 18 years old listen to at least a few minutes of audio media (primarily music), and more than 40% of those children spend more than an hour and a half listening each day. A child between the ages of 8 and 10 listens to nearly an hour of music each day. Children in late adolescence (15 to 18 years old) listen to music for more than 2.5 hours per day. Younger girls (8 to 14 years old) spend more time listening to music than boys that age. However, by late adolescence, there is virtually no difference by gender. Younger African American children (2 to 10 years old) listen to more radio than their white counterparts.

The amount of time spent with music has been a source of consternation for media researchers because of music's role as a backdrop for other activities including other media (e.g., TV, Internet). Adolescents are becoming increasingly adept at multiple media use. About 25% of adolescents' total media time is spent simultaneously using more than one type of media. Of course, the aural nature of music makes it a prime choice for multiple media activity.

CONTEXTS FOR MUSIC LISTENING

Music is not only suitable for multiple media use but also has an important role during nonmedia group or individual activities. As children age, they increasingly use music with their peers or siblings. From the age of 12, children are exposed to popular music in the company of friends at parties and dances. In addition, by early adolescence, radio and recordings are increasingly used in solitary or personal situations to supplement activities such as reading, studying, and talking on the phone. Of course, late adolescents rarely spend a minute in a car (either alone or with others) without music playing.

MUSIC GENRES

Whether listening with friends at a party or alone in their bedrooms, adolescents prefer popular music.

The number of music genres increased greatly during the late 20th century, but adolescents clearly favor two basic genres: rap/hip hop and rock. About 65% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 listen to rap/hip hop music on a typical day. More than 30% of children in that age range report listening to alternative rock on any given day. Although rap/hip hop is popular among adolescents regardless of their race, race has been identified as a good predictor of musical taste. African American adolescents are more likely to listen to rap/hip hop (about 80%) as well as R&B/soul, reggae, and gospel/Christian. White adolescents also listen to rap/hip hop but report listening to a wide array of rock-oriented genres, including alternative rock, hard rock, ska/punk, classic rock, and rave/techno. Regarding gender, differences are evident in only a few areas. Girls are more likely to report listening to soft rock and country and western, and boys are more likely to report listening to heavy metal.

MOTIVATIONS FOR MUSIC LISTENING

Researchers have identified several motives for music listening, regardless of genre preference; these fall into two basic categories: psychological benefits and psychosocial benefits. The psychological benefits are often described in terms of mood management, social stimulation, relaxation, relief of boredom, filling in silence. The psychosocial benefits include self-expression/identity and social utility.

As with other entertainment media, adolescents (and adults) often use music to manage their mood states. The mood management motive is evident in social and solitary listening contexts. In social contexts such as parties and dances, music stimulates or excites positive moods. Conversely, music is used by stressed or annoyed adolescents in solitary environments such as their bedrooms to soothe nerves or relieve anxiety. Adolescents who feel understimulated are likely to use music to relieve boredom or for filling silence. In addition, some adolescents report that listening to music can provide a sense of companionship, especially when they are feeling alienated.

Besides manipulating moods and providing comfort, music is also used for self-identification and self-expression. Music listening plays an important role in the shift toward independence from parents. Music listening can be the impetus for social interaction and the development of interpersonal relationships as well as self and group identities. Similarly, some adolescents approach pop music knowledge as social capital that can be used to improve their social status among their peers.

—William Kinnally

See also Mood Management Theory; Music Genres (various entries); Music Listening, Impact of

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MUSIC LYRICS, EFFECTS OF

Music lyrics encompass a variety of themes such as love, death, work, fun, substance use, politics, and so on. Song lyrics can also be abstract or explicit. In fact, much of the criticism that some songs receive focuses on the content of the lyrics, particularly those that contain sex- or violence-oriented material. Concerned critics contend that negative music lyrics can influence youth attitudes, values, and behaviors. However, the extent to which song lyrics are influential depends, first and foremost, on the individual's ability to comprehend the lyrics they hear.

Researchers have examined comprehension of lyrics by asking adolescents to report their interpretation of certain lyrics and then comparing their interpretations with the true meaning as defined by experts. A summary of this research suggests that most

adolescents do not fully comprehend the definitive or true meaning of song lyrics. Given these findings, the role of memory is an important consideration. The ability to accurately recall specific lyrics will impact one's ability to reflect on and comprehend the meaning of a song. Studies have addressed this by having adolescents listen to a song and then report on its meaning or read a transcript of the lyrics before interpreting the music. These studies suggest that when lyrics are heard, they are not as easily or accurately remembered or interpreted as when the lyrics are read. Because information can be reviewed if necessary, reading lyrics can help facilitate memory acquisition and increase the information available for interpretation and more accurate comprehension. Unless a song is heard repeatedly, it is unlikely that an adolescent will fully retain the content of the lyrics.

Background characteristics of youth help explain why differences in comprehension of song lyrics have emerged. Compared to adolescents and college students, young children are likely to interpret song lyrics more literally. Cognitive developmental research has consistently found that young children tend to think concretely and to develop abstract thinking abilities only as they grow older. The interpretation and meaning of song lyrics also differ as a function of social class, race, and gender; that is, adolescents who come from similar backgrounds and have similar experiences are likely to interpret lyrics in roughly the same manner. Altogether, the current research suggests that children differ from adolescents in music comprehension based on their cognitive abilities. Moreover, lyric comprehension differs, depending on adolescent demographics.

The comprehension of song lyrics is complex and dynamic. Based on schema theory, adolescents are not blank slates; rather, they comprehend lyrics using their own unique set of experiences. These experiences help form the basis of an individual's schemas (simple mental representations of complex events), which play a relevant role in interpreting new information. Life's daily distractions make it difficult for us to partake in deep processing of song lyrics. Such distractions can elevate cognitive load, thus increasing the likelihood that people will rely on existing schemas or any available cues to interpret lyrics. In essence, when conditions make it difficult for adolescents to deeply process music lyrics (e.g., at parties, listening to iPOD while doing other activities), their preexisting schemas or any available cues in the song will influence their interpretation of the lyrics. For example, a preadolescent boy who is dancing with someone he is attracted to might hear the lyrics, "say you'll be there" (by the Spice Girls) and easily misinterpret the song to mean that boys should always be there for their girlfriends, when in fact, the song lyrics imply casual, no-strings-attached sex.

As evident in prior research, the understanding of adolescents' comprehension of music lyrics requires a multifaceted approach. The developmental importance of cognitive ability is highlighted in the fact that younger children are less likely to comprehend the true meaning of song lyrics compared to adolescents and emerging adults. One must also consider the impact of memory and its effect on adolescents' ability to accurately interpret song lyrics. Furthermore, background characteristics also play an important role because they help color how one understands music lyrics. Similarly, prior knowledge and experience can shape the meaning imposed on song lyrics, especially under highly distracting situations. Also, the impact of music lyrics on adolescents' and emerging adults' lives will depend on the degree to which the lyrics are actually understood. Teenagers are experiencing considerable psychological and physical changes associated with puberty; thus, adolescents can sometimes live tumultuous lives that can make it difficult to pay close attention to the things happening around them, such as the lyrics of the songs to which they are listening.

—Byron L. Zamboanga and Liliana Rodriguez

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Music Listening, Impact of; Music Listening, Uses of; Music Lyrics, Music Television and; Schema Theory; Schemas/ Scripts, Gender

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MUSIC LYRICS, MUSIC TELEVISION AND

Over the past 50 years, there have been dramatic changes in the styles of contemporary popular music, but despite dynamic changes in the types of musical

genres favored by adolescents and young adults (the major consumers of popular music), the lyrical theme of being in love remains the most common. The manner in which the experience of being in love is described in song lyrics, however, has changed during the past five decades. Lyrics expressing romantic love dominated the 1940s and 1950s. With the advent of folk and folk rock music in the 1960s, song lyrics began to express the physical side of love. Songs with themes of drug use (marijuana and LSD) and protest against war also emerged as a reflection of the times. The rise of disco dance music in the 1970s brought a resurgence of songs about romantic love and having fun. In the 1980s, the lyrics of popular rock music included themes of infatuation and a greater emphasis on sexual attraction. Along with the acceptance of greater sexual permissiveness in Western society, sexual lyrics have become increasingly common. Songs with violent lyrics also emerged in the 1980s, particularly in punk rock and heavy metal music. Songs with occult themes were not uncommon. The increase in themes of sex, violence, satanism, and drugs and alcohol became a controversial topic during the decade of the 1980s, as groups such as the Parents Music Resource Center came out strongly against popular music lyrics, resulting in voluntary labeling of song lyrics by the recording industry. The growth of rap music and its subgenre, gangsta rap, during the 1990s brought an ever-increasing level of sexual, violent, and misogynistic lyrics. Controversial lyrical themes of sexual violence against women, including rape, torture, and degradation, are not uncommon in some forms of recorded rap music.

Since the 1980s, when song lyrics became a topic of national controversy, a number of research studies have been conducted to explore the effects of antisocial song lyrics on listeners. The majority of studies have investigated the effects of violent or sexually violent lyrics on hostile and aggressive attitudes. Most studies show that violent and sexually violent lyrics do impact listeners' attitudes, at least in the short term. A set of experiments by Anderson, Carnagey, and Eubanks, for example, demonstrated that violent lyrics increased aggressive thoughts and hostility, at least in the short term. In another study, Wester, Crown, Quatman, and Heesacker found that young men exposed to sexually violent lyrics reported more adversarial attitudes toward the women in their relationships. Contemporary psychological theories predict that exposure will have long-term as well as short-term effects on listeners, but longitudinal studies are needed to determine long-term effects of listening to antisocial music lyrics.

In 1981, the world of contemporary popular music was dramatically altered by the advent of Music Television (the MTV Networks). For the first time, music and film were combined in a new medium, the music video. Music videos are extremely popular among adolescent and young adult viewers, and listeners generally like music videos more than recorded music alone. As a result of the strong appeal of music videos, MTV has grown from a single broadcasting station in New York to become a global phenomenon. Recently, MTV announced its 100th non-U.S. cable station. In the United States, several other cable networks offer music videos to selected audiences (e.g., Country Music Television and Black Entertainment Television). Music videos allow viewers to watch and listen to their favorite performers simultaneously, and the visuals add meaning to the songs.

Since its inception, the music video has added to the music lyric controversy because of the nature of the visual content. Images containing sex and violence have engendered the most criticism. Music videos typically include visuals that dramatize the song's lyrics; therefore, the kinds of visual content shown tend to be consistent with the content of lyrical themes. Many content analyses have been conducted to investigate the nature of music video visuals, and they generally document high levels of sexual and violent images, antisocial behavior, and sexist portrayals of women. In recent years, sexual imagery has received more study than violent imagery has. Several studies during the late 1980s investigated violent visual content. In these studies, the percentages of videos containing violence ranged from a low of 15% to more than 50%. When videos contained violence, they averaged about 2.7 violent acts per video. Violent and sexual imagery are often combined in the same video. Sherman and Dominick reported that about 45% of the videos samples contained both types of imagery.

In various content analyses of the visual images in music videos, sexual imagery has been reported in about 40% to 75% of music videos. The depictions, however, tend to be mild and nongraphic, typically consisting of touching, kissing, and suggestive body movements. Images of sexual intercourse or other actual sex acts are almost never shown. Sexual imagery is most frequently depicted in the form of scantily or provocatively clad women posed or

dancing suggestively. When nudity is shown, sexual areas of the body (female nipples, male and female genitalia) are generally blocked from view; although minimally covered breasts and bikini- or thong-clad female buttocks are prevalent images. Sexual images of women are much more common than those of men, and they vary somewhat across musical genres and across networks. In a recent content analysis of videos across four music television channels by Hansen and Hansen, BET surpassed CMT, VH1, and MTV in the percentage of videos containing visual images of scantily or provocatively clad women (about 77%), but MTV's sister station, VH1, was close behind (about 71%). However, both men (about 45%) and women (about 35%) were much more likely to be portrayed as sexually aggressive in videos shown on BET (showing predominantly rap and R&B videos) than on any of the other networks studied (the others ranged from 8% to 21%). Across all networks, women were two to three times more likely to be presented as sex objects than men were, and female sex objects were most prevalent on BET (they appeared in about 67% of the rap and R&B videos). The degree of sexuality also appears to differ across genres. Durant and colleagues found that sexuality was much more likely to be a significant component of rap or R&B videos than of other kinds of music videos, such as adult contemporary, rock, or country.

—Christine H. Hansen

See also Music Videos, Effects of

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MUSIC VIDEOS, AMOUNT OF VIEWING AND

The Kaiser Family Foundation's 2005 study, *Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year Olds* revealed that children and adolescents spend an average of 1.44 hours a day listening to music. Boys spend about an hour and a half a day listening to music; girls spend about 2 hours. About a third of those listening to music were often using other media at the same time. Music videos make up a significant part of music listening among youth in the United States. The Parents Television Council reported in March 2004 that the MTV network was watched by 73% of boys and 78% of girls between 12 and 19 years old. Boys watched an average of 6.6 hours per week, and girls watched for an average of 6.2 hours per week. Although music listening can play positive roles in the lives of teens and adolescents, parents and policymakers have expressed concerns about their exposure to music videos with violent or sexual content, as well as content that portrays substance use. Amount of viewing is a key variable, however. Moderate exposure to the negative content in music videos appears unlikely to adversely affect healthy individuals who have many other interests and activities, good family relationships, and strong academic and social skills. For those with fewer strengths or options in their lives, the potential for negative influence appears to be much greater.

MTV, now almost 25 years old, was a cornerstone of the movement to make the music video the accessible medium it is today. In 2001, PBS On-line reported

that MTV reached more than 350 million households globally, and in 2004, the Parents Television Council reported that MTV was watched by 73% of boys and 78% of girls ages 12 to 19. In addition to music videos, however, MP3s are now everywhere, and music lyrics and video clips, some of which contain more sex and violence than those available in stores, can be downloaded and shared, increasing the presence and potential impact of music in children's lives. A Yahoo press release in 2003 indicated that its music section, LAUNCH, streamed more than a billion music videos to consumers that year. That quadrupled the number streamed in the first 10 months of the previous year, underscoring the increasing popularity of using the Internet to watch music videos. According to the Kaiser Foundation study, nearly two thirds of 8-to-18-year-olds have downloaded music from the Internet, and almost half have streamed a ratio station through the Internet. Nearly one in five has an MP3 player.

Children and adolescents sometimes use music to relax, to fill time, to avoid doing other things, to provide a background as they do homework, or to escape into a more fanciful world. At other times, they may use music in more social ways such as listening with friends. As one of their strongest media influences, music helps children and adolescents express, think about, and deal with the complex social, family, identity, and school/work challenges they face. The potential for significant impact on their use of other media and on their developing beliefs and attitudes is huge, and they can learn both positive and negative lessons about how to live their lives.

Even a modest amount of viewing of music videos results in significant exposure to glamorized depictions of alcohol and tobacco use, sexuality, aggression, violence, and weapons. In 2004, a Parents Television Council publication reported that in 171 hours of MTV programming, young viewers were seeing an average of nine sexual scenes per hour, with about 18 sexual depictions, and 17 examples of sexual innuendo or sexual dialogue, compared with just under six instances of sexual content in later hours when only adults would be watching. Similarly, there were many more instances of foul language and profanities on MTV than during the later broadcasts aimed at adults. There is a good deal of violent content as well, including violence against women. Almost half of the children said they watch something different when they are alone than when they watch TV with their parents, and 25% of them chose MTV.

Parents, teachers, pediatricians, and researchers have raised concerns about the effects of heavy viewing of such content. The American Academy of Pediatrics, for example, voiced concern about the popular music video formats available to the 70% of American households that have cable. It suggested that when music lyrics are illustrated in the videos, their potential influence may be greater because viewers who may not have understood or listened closely to some of the lyrics cannot avoid the many, often disturbing visual images. A good deal of research also indicates that the frequent depictions of violence, negative and demeaning portrayals of women, stereotypic images, and portrayals of alcohol use and tobacco use can affect children negatively and influence their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. There are some findings, for example, of an association between frequent depictions of alcohol and smoking and the greater likelihood that heavy viewers of that content will drink or smoke.

In large numbers of music videos, violence and sexual behavior are presented in dramatic ways, compared with few if any depictions of less dramatic or glamorous behavior, such as cooperation or academic achievement. Viewing such content can affect children's and adolescents' attitudes about those behaviors as well. Exposure to massive amounts of aggressive and violent behavior has been shown to be negatively associated with prosocial behavior in some studies. Stars of music videos also have an influence as models or icons with whom children and adolescents identify. If identification with media stars occurs, their behavior can influence children's behavior and attitudes directly, or the viewers can experience some of those behaviors vicariously.

—Judith Van Evra

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Genre Preferences; Music Genres (various entries); Music Listening, Impact of; School-Age Children, Impact of the Media on; Violence (various entries)

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MUSIC VIDEOS, EFFECTS OF

Music videos appeared on the Music Television Network (MTV) in New York for the first time in 1981, and almost since their inception, they have been controversial. Music videos combine popular music with video, allowing viewers to listen to the music and see the performers at the same time. Music videos also frequently include images or a video story to enhance the song lyrics. Following the advent of MTV, several other music channels emerged in the United States (e.g., VH1, MTV's sister station; Black Entertainment Television [BET], and Country Music Television [CMT]), each targeting different segments of the viewing population. Over the past two decades, music videos have become a global phenomenon, and MTV recently announced its 100th non-U.S. music station.

Most of the controversy over music videos has involved the presence of sexual, violent, misogynistic, and antisocial images. Sexual and violent content has received the most scrutiny. For example, in 1988, the National Academy of Pediatrics came out strongly against the presence of sexual and violent content in music videos, arguing that these images make music videos unwholesome viewing for children. High levels of sexual and violent imagery in music videos have been documented by numerous content analyses. High levels of antisocial behavior (i.e., rebellious and socially unacceptable behaviors) also have been documented, along with sexist and sex-role stereotypic treatment of women. A great deal of evidence has now accumulated that the themes common in music videos, such as violence and sexism, can prime listeners' own schemas for social behavior, resulting in greater affinity for and acceptance of socially negative attitudes and behavior.

A number of nonexperimental studies have been conducted to look at the relationship between exposure to music videos and attitudes and personality of viewers. Several studies have found links between exposure and sexual attitudes. For example, Tiggeman and Pickering found that among college-age women, time spent viewing MTV predicts sexual permissiveness as well as more tolerant attitudes toward sexual harassment and a "drive-for-thinness," a potential precursor of anorexia and bulimia. Affinity for sexual content in music videos has been related to how much time young women spend viewing music videos, and for both young men and young women, heavy viewers reported a greater number of sexual behaviors in the real world than light viewers did.

The kinds of popular music aired most frequently differ greatly across music video networks, and although young people's preferences for music can cross music genres, fans tend to spend most of their time with their favorite type of music. Most research studies have explored personality and behavior attributes associated with a preference for particular kinds of popular music and music videos rather than exposure to music videos in general, and in many studies, music preferences appear to be linked to clusters of traits and attitudes.

Pop music (also called adult contemporary music), largely the domain of VH1, is considered the mainstream music for adolescents and young adults. Because pop music generally revolves around nonviolent themes of love, courtship, friendship, and having fun, it has received only cursory mentions in the research literature. For similar reasons, other less controversial genres, such as country music, soul music, classic rock, and alternative rock have not been studied. Most research has focused on the kinds of music that have created the most public controversy: punk rock, hard rock and heavy metal, and rap music. Fans of these three genres show a number of reliable differences in personality characteristics and attitudes. Studies have shown that fans of punk music, for example, appear to be less accepting of authority than fans of other music genres, and the strength of their anti-authority attitudes are directly related to the amount of time they report listening to punk music. In contrast, Hansen and Hansen found that fans of hard rock and heavy metal have been found to be higher in antisocial personality traits such as Machiavellianism

and machismo and lower in the need for cognition. A study by Arnett showed that fans of hard rock and heavy metal are also higher in attributes related to risk taking, such as sensation seeking and recklessness. Less is known about the attributes associated with fans of rap music, but they may be more impulsive and more likely to seek external stimulation through motor activity and extroverted behavior. In studies comparing fans of heavy metal and rap music with fans of other kinds of music, heavy metal and rap music fans reported more hostile attitudes toward others and more negative attitudes toward women than fans of other kinds of music. A preference for rap and heavy metal has also been found to correlate positively with drug use, arrests, sexual activity, and school behavior problems and to correlate negatively with academic performance. Unfortunately, because studies of this type are correlational in nature, causal direction cannot be established with certainty.

Experimental research conducted to test the effects of music videos on viewers, however, has produced a number of highly consistent results indicating that exposure to music videos has predictable effects on cognition and behavior, and effects tend to parallel video content. Most researchers have investigated the impact of short exposures to videos containing sexual, violent, sexist, and antisocial lyrics and images compared to exposure to videos without these themes. In a study by Greenson and Williams, those who experienced even a short exposure to videos with high levels of violent and sexually permissive content were more likely to endorse these values than subjects who watched neutral music videos. In similar studies, young men exposed to violent rock music videos have reported an increase in aggressive attitudes toward women, and exposing young black men to violent rap music videos resulted in greater endorsement of violent behavior in a hypothetical situation involving conflict. In addition, exposure to rock music videos containing antisocial behavior has been shown to result in greater acceptance of antisocial behavior by subjects of both genders.

Studies of the effects of videos with sex-role stereotypic and misogynistic themes have reported the same kinds of content-related effects. For example, when compared to subjects who watched rock music videos with neutral themes, male and female subjects exposed to videos that portrayed women in sex-role stereotypic (i.e., male dominant, female submissive) roles reported much greater liking for women who behaved in a sex-role stereotypic manner than for women who behaved counterstereotypically; those who watched the neutral videos preferred women who behaved nontraditionally. In a study by Johnson, Adams, Ashburn, and Reed comparing the effects of nonviolent rap music videos that contained images of sexually subordinate women with a no-video control condition, adolescent black females exposed to the sexist videos reported much greater acceptance of teen dating violence.

—Christine H. Hansen

See also see Hip Hop, Violence in; Music Listening, Effects of; Music Listening, Problem Behavior and; Music Lyrics, Music Television and; Violence, Effects of

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NARRATIVE STORIES

While everyone loves a good story, the value of narrative stories goes far beyond enjoyment. Cultures transmit much of what is important through narrative stories, including moral messages. Through stories, the complexities of human interactions are portrayed. Children's ability to comprehend narratives is an important activity that allows them access to the cultural stories that pervade their daily lives across a variety of media. Although children are in middle childhood before they have the cognitive skills to understand these programs well, even infants and young children can understand stories if production features are used to highlight important content and if parents and teachers help children by repeating and summarizing important program messages and play with children in the process.

DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN NARRATIVE COMPREHENSION

In 1970, Andrew Collins divided the typical television story into central content, which is essential for understanding the story plot, and incidental content, which is irrelevant to the plot. He and his colleagues later divided the central material into (a) content explicitly or implicitly presented in the story and (b) content that is implicitly presented. Whereas explicit content is concretely presented and easily accessible, children have to figure out the meaning of implicit content, which is much more difficult for them. At a young age, children remember more incidental than central content, a pattern that changes when children are about age 9 or 10.

Understanding televised narratives involves several relatively complex cognitive activities. First, children must separate the central, plot-relevant material from the incidental, irrelevant material. Then, children must order and link the key central events over changes in time and space. Finally, children must understand the implicitly presented content by going beyond the information given and inferring character feelings and motives.

HOME AND SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

Although infants and young children do not have the cognitive skills that older children have, their comprehension can be improved in various ways. These include interventions that take place in the home or school, such as repeating and rehearsing the important story content, as well as interventions that are put into the story, such as visual and verbal summaries to emphasize story messages.

Repeating the content is one way to enhance story comprehension. For instance, Catherine Snow (2005) demonstrated that stories presented in books are better remembered after parents read them several times to their child. Similarly, Rachel Barr and her colleagues (2003) demonstrated that repeatedly seeing the same story also helps infants remember television depictions. Snow found that repetition allows children to keep the content constant while consolidating what they know.

In a classic television study, Lynette Friedrich and Aletha Stein (1975) examined how verbally rehearsing and acting out (i.e., role-playing) the important program messages in an episode of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* affected children's learning of the socially desirable program content. In the verbal rehearsal condition, an adult summarized the important central story content for children, a practice that helped girls remember the socially desirable program content. In the role-play condition, puppets were used to help children rehearse the key program content, a practice that helped boys behave in socially desirable ways.

PROGRAM INTERVENTIONS

Some of the same interventions that help children in the real world can also help children learn when they are built into the actual production. For instance, Daniel Anderson and his colleagues (2000) demonstrated that repeatedly showing vignettes and building summaries into the production can help young children understand the important program messages.

The production features used to present television content, such as action, sound effects, and dialogue, can also help children understand televised narratives. For example, Sandra Calvert and Tracey Gersh (1987) demonstrated that sound effects can help children understand the important television story content by getting children to look at just the right moment. Rachel Barr and her colleagues (2003) have demonstrated similar beneficial outcomes when using sound effects in programs made for infants. These studies suggest that using production features carefully can help very young children get program messages that they might otherwise miss.

Production features can also help children understand television content because they are similar to how young children think. For example, Sandra Calvert and her colleagues (1982) discovered that visual character actions and verbal character dialogue can help children understand the important program content because children can see pictures in their mind's eye and can also use the language they hear characters say as a way to think about the story content.

—Sandra L. Calvert

See also Coviewing; Media Effects; Schema Theory; Television, Attention and; Television, Prosocial Behavior and; Television, Viewer Age and

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NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is a nonprofit organization launched in 1996 at then-President Bill Clinton's urging. The campaign's mission was to reduce the teen pregnancy rate in the United States by one third over the following 10 years. By 2000, the pregnancy rate had dropped 28% from a high in 1990 of 117 pregnancies per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19 years old to 84 per 1,000. The latter teen pregnancy rate is still one of the highest in the industrialized world.

The National Campaign is led by a board of directors chaired by former New Jersey Governor Thomas H. Kean, four task forces (on the entertainment media; religion, public values, and public policy; effective

programs and research; and state and local action), a national youth advisory group, and bipartisan advisory panels in both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. Through these groups and a staff of about 20, the National Campaign takes a multi-pronged approach to reducing teen pregnancy. By the end of the 1990s, the campaign had become one of the primary resources available for preventing teen pregnancy and claimed to have almost reached its goal.

One of the most notable elements of the National Campaign is use of entertainment education as a strategy for getting sexually responsible messages to teens and parents. The National Campaign has partnered with more than 70 media companies, including *Teen People* magazine, the WB Network, and Fox Broadcasting; the media agree to include pregnancy prevention articles and scenarios in their entertainment programs. The campaign has worked closely with the producers of the hit teen show, *Dawson's Creek*, for example, to develop story lines that include portrayals of teens pledging abstinence, condom negotiation and use, and the risks of multiple partners and unprotected sex. The articles and shows often direct adolescents to the campaign's website, where they and their parents can learn more about pregnancy prevention.

In partnership with national advertising agencies, the National Campaign also produces a widely distributed series of print and television public service announcements, including a controversial "Sex Has Consequences" campaign that some critics claim does more to stigmatize youth than it does to prevent teen pregnancy. They also initiated the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, which encourages teens to take an online quiz reflecting on the best course of action in tough sexual situations. In 2005, more than a half million youth completed the quiz.

The National Campaign treads a careful nonideological line in a time when teen sexuality is hotly debated. Rather than engage in the ongoing debates over abstinence education or condom availability, the campaign steadfastly argues that reducing teen pregnancy is a good investment because a number of social problems including school failure, crime, and child abuse and neglect might be reduced if more children were born to parents who were ready and able to care for them.

The campaign has published more than 25 research-based reports and fact sheets on a range of topics, from the influence of parents on their teens' sexual behavior to best practices for teen pregnancy prevention programs. Campaign leaders have also testified before key congressional committees and hosted briefings for congressional staff.

—Jane D. Brown

See also Sex, Media Impact on

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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ADOLESCENT SEXUAL HEALTH

The National Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health was convened in 1994 by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), a nonprofit organization that advocates for comprehensive education about sexuality. SIECUS brought together 21 experts, chaired by Robert Johnson, director of adolescent medicine at the New Jersey Medical School. The commission reviewed existing literature about adolescents' sexual health and held a series of meetings over the course of a year to establish guidelines for educating adolescents about sexuality.

Their findings and recommendations were published in a report, *Facing Facts: Sexual Health for America's Adolescents.* The report was endorsed by 48 organizations, including the American Medical Association, the National Council of the Churches of Christ, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Girls Inc., and the YWCA of the U.S.A.

The commission concluded that "responsible adolescent intimate relationships should be based on shared personal values and be consensual, nonexploitative, honest, pleasurable, and protected against unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, if any type of intercourse occurs" (p. 4). The report includes guidelines for parents, adolescent health-care providers, sexual health curricula, and the media.

The commission, recognizing that "the mass media have become a major source of young people's information about sexuality" (p. 26), encouraged the media to provide accurate information and model responsible behavior. Specifically, the commission called for writers, producers, programming executives, reporters, and others to provide diverse and positive views of a range of body images because thin, beautiful people are not the only people who have sex; to include portrayals and discussion of protection against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and to outline the possible negative consequences if protection is not used. The guidelines also encourage the portrayal of typical sexual interactions as respectful and nonexploitative and an increased depiction of effective parent-child communication about sexuality and relationships.

The commission also called on the media to lift barriers to contraceptive and condom product advertising and to provide ways for young people to obtain additional information about sexuality and sexual health, for example, by listing addresses of public health organizations and support groups.

The commission's guidelines have been used by many organizations as a benchmark for sexuality education curriculum development and for interaction with the media about portrayals of sexual behavior.

—Jane D. Brown

See also Contraceptive Advertising; Sex, Media Impact on

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NATIONAL TELEVISION VIOLENCE STUDY

The National Television Violence Study (NTVS) constitutes the largest and most systematic content analysis of television programming ever conducted and reported in a single investigation. Published in two volumes and a third executive summary volume, the work represents more than 10,000 hours of TV content gathered over a 3-year period (1994–1997). The programs were recorded and coded in an effort to document the amount and types of violence that appear on television. The sampling frame included programs aired between the hours of 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. on any of 23 television channels. Unlike many published samples, the shows were selected randomly and included ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox as well as independent stations, public broadcasting stations, basic cable stations, and premium cable channels—HBO, Showtime, and Cinemax. Sports networks such as ESPN and news channels such as CNN were not included in the sample. On the basis of study findings, a number of recommendations were made for the television industry, policymakers, and parents.

The study was funded by the National Cable Television Association and conducted by researchers from four universities (University of California at Santa Barbara, University of Texas at Austin, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). The group from Santa Barbara examined portrayals of violence in entertainment programming. The group from Austin focused on portrayals of violence on reality programming. The group from Wisconsin studied the impact of TV violence ratings and advisories on the viewing behavior of parents and children. The group from Chapel Hill explored the impact of anti-violence public service announcements (PSAs).

The NTVS researchers also benefited from an advisory council consisting of representatives from a total of 18 national organizations. These organizations included professional associations from the television industry, academic and scholarly organizations, and health organizations as well as legal, parental, and educational organizations. This panel was charged with ensuring the academic integrity of the studies and with providing the researchers feedback about the studies. The feedback was intended to represent a wide variety of perspectives and voices to supplement and not override the researchers' decisions and conclusions.

Three forms of violence were coded in this investigation: credible threats of physical force, actual acts of physical force, and harmful consequences of unseen violence. The inclusion of manifest and underlying codes for violence is significant because, all too often, researchers ignore underlying events that actually happen off-screen. These omissions result in the underestimation of the occurrences of violence on TV.

A founding principle of the NTVS is that not all violence poses the same degree of risk. Rather, the

context of the violence partially determines whether the portrayal will be harmful to viewers. Based on an extensive review of the literature on the effects of media violence, the NTVS researchers identified a range of contextual features that may increase or decrease the risk of harmful effects:

Attractive perpetrator

Attractive victim

Justified violence

Unjustified violence

Conventional weapons

Extensive/graphic violence

Realistic violence

Rewards and punishments

Pain/harm cues

Humor

As described in the subsequent NTVS findings, consideration of these contextual features indicates that most TV violence is portrayed in ways that pose risks to viewers.

OVERALL TV PROGRAMMING

Television portrayals of violence were relatively stable over the 3-year period. About 61% of all programs on television contained some violence. Nearly 40% of that violence was enacted by "good" characters—characters likely to be employed as models by viewers. Similarly, more than 33% of the "bad" characters engaging in violent behavior were not punished within the program. In fact, in more than 70% of the violent scenes, characters behaving in a violent manner were not criticized by other characters, did not appear to feel any remorse for their actions, and were not punished at the time. During the 1996–1997 TV season, 67% of the programs in prime time contained violence. Findings indicated that children watching 2 hours of cartoons a day would see somewhere in the area of 10,000 violent incidents in a calendar year.

Generally, acts of violence are sanitized or trivialized. Depictions typically do not contain information about the long-term consequences of the violence, and half of the time, the programs do not contain portrayals of the harm or pain caused to the victim by the violent agent. During the 3-year period, the amount of violence found on the broadcast networks and basic cable increased, and the highest percentage of programs containing violence could be found on the premium cable channels. Over that same 3-year period, less than 5% of the programs contained an antiviolence message. The typical violent program contained at least six acts of violence per hour, and more than 40% of the violent scenes were either couched in a humorous context or contained an element of humor.

REALITY PROGRAMMING

Reality programs are less likely to contain violence than television programming overall. More than 39% of the reality programs contained violence, compared to 61% of the overall programming. However, violence portrayals vary greatly among the genres of reality programming. All of the police reality shows contained violence, whereas only 15% of the talk shows contained acts of violence. Other genres of reality programs (tabloid news and documentaries) also contained high levels of violence, while entertainment and public affairs programs were much closer to the 39% average for reality programs. It is interesting to note that the number of reality programs increased from 384 to 526 over the 3-year period, and the percentage of programs containing violence was stable at about 39% each year; thus, the overall amount of violence did not decline over that same period.

RATINGS, ADVISORIES, AND VIOLENCE

TV parental guidelines are the codes or ratings applied to television programming in an effort by the industry to provide parents with information about the age-appropriateness and content of a particular program. The system, which is analogous to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) ratings, was introduced in January 1997. The two ratings for children's programming are TVY (i.e., program is appropriate for all children) and TVY7 (i.e., program is appropriate for children 7 years and older). About 42% of the children's shows rated TVY—and 69% of the programs rated TVY7—contained violence. Some effort to employ the ratings as a way to help parents help children avoid violence is evident. General audience program ratings—those programs not identified as children's programs—are a different story. Nearly half of the programs rated TVG, TVPG, and TV14

contained violence. In short, violence is just as common in programs rated appropriate for all viewers (TVG) as it is in programs that suggest parental guidance (TVPG) and programs that are not appropriate for children under the age of 14 (TV14).

Other findings suggest that only 7% of the programs containing violence were rated, and only about 5% of all the programs aired during the 1996–1997 season were rated. The premium channels typically air movies and employ the MPAA coding system. It is interesting to note that fewer than 1% of those movies were rated G or general interest and suitable for all audiences. The vast majority of the movies (68%) were rated either PG or PG-13. When a rating is displayed, there is seldom an accompanying voice-over or audio warning for viewers. Obviously, parents in another room or multitasking will be unlikely to see the ratings that appear for a program. Furthermore, only one program in the composite week was rated TVMA, or a program most appropriate for mature audiences. Although the number of TVMA programs undoubtedly varies from channel to channel, it is clear that very few programs received the TVMA rating during the three seasons analyzed. Finally, programs aired during prime time were more likely to be rated than programs appearing during other time slots during the day. This appears to be an effort at ensuring the most watched programs contain ratings.

ANTI-VIOLENCE MESSAGES

In addition to the massive content analysis efforts described above, five separate experiments containing 1,600 subjects were also conducted to examine the impact of the content on audience members. In these studies, violence was defined as "overt depictions of a credible threat of physical force or the actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings." These experiments investigated the impact of violence on interest level, arousal, and mood of the respondents, as well as the effect of conflict management training. The Chapel Hill group also examined message design considerations for PSAs and concluded that the depiction of negative consequences to violence increases the effectiveness of anti-violence PSAs. In fact, the more extreme the negative consequence, the more effective the PSA was at changing the attitudes of students between the ages of 11 and 15. Interestingly, the students reported believing that showing anti-violence PSAs with no consequences would be a relatively ineffective strategy for changing attitudes about violence, a result that mirrors the findings of the Chapel Hill group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The NTVS concludes with recommendations to the television industry, policymakers, and parents. Recommendations for the television industry include increasing efforts to show the negative consequences of programmatic violence, incorporating more anti-violence messages into story lines, and reducing the number of violent acts in general and specifically on children's programming. In addition, the rating system could be more effective if networks were encouraged to adopt it, used the system more systematically, included oral ratings along with the visual ratings that appear in programs, and avoided using age-based ratings.

Anti-violence PSAs or media campaigns need to rely less on celebrity endorsements and more on narrative strategies, including the negative consequences of violence. They should also avoid corporate logos and keep tags to a minimum; these distract the viewers and reduce the amount of time available for anti-violence messages to reach their audience.

Policymakers need to continue monitoring violence on television and recognize that context plays an important role in understanding violence on TV. More effort needs to be made to educate parents about the potential effects of violence and the ratings system. Policymakers need to ensure that the ratings system is not discontinued or used in a less than systematic fashion.

Finally, parents are encouraged to learn more about the content available on television, to be more involved with their children's TV viewing, and to talk with their children about violence and the new television rating system. All of these recommendations come from the findings presented in the NTVS and are generally consistent with the 3,500 or more studies on media violence that have been conducted in the United States alone.

—James D. Robinson,
Ronda M. Scantlin, and Yan Tian

See also Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to; Violence, Desensitization Toward; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Longitudinal Studies of

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NATIVE AMERICANS, MEDIA USE BY

The Native Americans of the 21st century are a diverse and complex group of people whose demographic patterns and cultural multiplicity result from five centuries of interaction between the indigenous population of North America and the Europeans who colonized the continent. From 1492 to about 1890, Native Americans endured a 400-year military struggle; it ended at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, on December 29, 1890. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 4.1 million Americans (1.5% of the U.S. population) report their race as Native American or Alaska Native (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). This number includes 2.5 million people, or 0.9% of the total U.S. population, who report only American Indian and Alaska Native background, in addition to the 1.6 million people, or 0.6% of the total, who report American Indian and Alaska Native in combination with another race. There are about equal numbers of Native American males and females, and they are a young people, with an average age of 28 years. Almost one third of Native Americans are children under the age of 18, whereas only 7% are age 65 and older. Far from a homogeneous population, with more than 500 tribes, the many Native American subpopulations are culturally distinctive, diverse, and complex. The Native American population is often thought of as being isolated on reservations, but the majority—by 2000, more than 60%—actually live in urban environments. More than 550 tribes are recognized by the U.S. government, including 223 village groups in Alaska. The Census 2000 identified Native American tribal groupings with 100,000 or more people as Cherokee, Navajo, Latin American Indian, Choctaw, Sioux, and Chippewa.

COMMUNICATION STYLES

In general, Native American communication styles are vastly different from the communication styles of other U.S. citizens. These communication styles affect media preferences, and they should be kept in mind by those developing new media specifically for Native Americans. Of course, communication styles vary among tribes and individuals, but there are several common elements among Native Americans

Patience. Concepts of time appear to be different for Native Americans; they often take more time to make decisions and consider possibilities and ways of being. Patience is a way of being, a way of seeing, a way of thinking, and a way of conducting oneself in the world. Silence is common among Native Americans, one manifestation of patience, which in turn is a respectful way of communicating. Often mistaken for shyness, silence is a form of communication in many Native American cultures. For Native Americans, silence often represents a period of reading body language and nonverbal communications. It is also a time in which American Indian clients may evaluate and test the specialists attempting to assist them.

Listening and observing. Most Native Americans may appear quiet and not as talkative as others, but this quietude is a skill that is taught, encouraged, and valued among them. Native Americans do a lot more listening than talking, and this behavior is seen as a sign of respect. Seeing, knowing, experiencing, and understanding involve listening intently and observing keenly the seen and unseen world, as well as understanding the relationship between these worlds. According to Fixico (2003), Indian thinking not only involves listening for sounds, but hearing while understanding the unseen.

Oral tradition. Storytelling is the foundation of the Native American oral tradition. The aforementioned patience, listening, and observing are essential skills for understanding the metaphors and relationships inherent in storytelling. Oral tradition typically passes stories down from generation to generation; these stories preserve the culture, transmit the history, tell personal biographies, entertain, educate, and inform. Stories serve different functions. For example, creation stories help explain the beginning of the physical and spiritual universe. Some stories are metaphors for explaining

cultural values. Native Americans typically are a visual and oral culture and use stories as a means of conveying information or teaching morals and values.

Modesty value. Many Native American cultures have different behaviors around eye contact, and Coyhis (1999) estimates that close to half of Native American cultures do not maintain eye contact. To be modest is to be polite and respectful and to honor the other person. Modesty is manifested by not staring into the eyes of the other, but rather looking away.

Nonlinear thinking. To think like an Indian means that things, feelings, knowledge, and events are seen in their context to each other and that this contextual relationship is cyclical. Viewing life through a nonlinear lens lets people see their relationship to both their past and their future as a continuum that includes both ancestors and legacies. All things are related, and everything is involved. An approach to life that is circular provides context and relationship. Groups become more important than individuals, and individuals are not left in isolation but related to all things around them. Thus, thinking and communication become inclusive, not exclusive.

Humor. Humor is often a part of Native American cultures, and it may be used in many ways. Humor can be a way to increase comfort level or serve as part of the storytelling process. Finally, humor may serve as a defense mechanism against pain, trauma, distress, or an embarrassing situation.

NATIVE AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE MEDIA

Native Americans find their media images everywhere, and young children's conceptions often first develop out of media portrayals. Unfortunately, Native American children first see negative or outrageously unrealistic images of themselves. They see their faces on established brand names and trademarks that use Native American representations, such as Jeep Cherokee, Sue Bee Honey, or Crazy Horse Malt Liquor. Merskin (2001) found that these images are a result of assumptions about Native Americans and contribute to negative stereotyping and racism. Movies and television shows such as *Dances With Wolves, How the West Was Lost,* or *Northern Exposure* tend to rely on stereotypical images of Native Americans or show them existing in the past. Merskin found that film presented more positive images of Native Americans than did television. Because children have television in their homes on a daily basis, this is of particular concern. Studies of the role of television in the development and maintenance of stereotypes are particularly troubling, given that Graves (1999) showed that television reinforces and maintains stereotypes in children that potentially contribute to prejudice and discrimination, a finding confirmed by others, including Rutland, Cameron, Milne, and McGeorge (2005). Sports teams that Native American youth may see on TV have Native American names, such as the Atlanta Braves, Cleveland Indians, Washington Redskins, and Florida State Seminoles. More disturbingly, several universities have mascots who are merely termed ”chiefs” or “Indians,” for example, Arkansas State University, Catawba College in North Carolina, and the University of Louisiana-Monroe. Most of these mascots dress up like make-believe Indians in exaggerated warfare outfits with red-painted faces.

Print Media

A Cherokee man named Sequoyah, who described the pages of books as “talking leaves,” is credited with developing the Cherokee writing system in the 1820s. There is some debate over whether Sequoya actually invented the system or was simply the last of his tribe's scribe clan (the rest having been massacred). Since that time, Native Americans have written newspaper and magazine articles, fiction and nonfiction books, poetry, and lyrics. Trahant (1995) suggests that the media have created false images of the Native American and that until Native Americans project their own images, these false images will persist. Fortunately, many Native American authors have contributed to the ranks of successful mainstream books. Authors such as Louise Erdrich, Sherman Alexie, and Vine Deloria have contributed to an understanding of the complexities of Native American culture that is guided not by the dominant worldview but instead by depictions *of* Native Americans *by* Native Americans. Several bibliographies and guides on the Internet identify books portraying positive and accurate images of Native American youth and recommend the writings of contemporary and past Native Americans. Appropriate books that do not reinforce negative stereotypes can be found on the Internet, including the American Library Association's website.

Internet

Inaccurate perceptions of Native American culture are being used in the classroom, partially because much of the information used in classrooms is downloaded from well-meaning, but non-Native Internet sites. This information includes uninformed and stereotypical expressions of Native American culture. For this and other reasons, in 2001, the National Museum of the American Indian launched a website to introduce appropriate Native American media for youth and adults. The site provides information about new productions and media makers, as well as special projects that are related to Native American media. The mission of the Film and Video Center of the National Museum of the American Indian is to provide appropriate information about the work of Native Americans in media. The Native Networks website offers information on Native Americans in media. A comprehensive index of Native American media resources on the Internet delivers information on every available media format for Native Americans.

Radio

Radio, especially Internet-assisted radio, is one of the most far-reaching advances that help support Native American communication for youth. Typically produced by Native Americans, many of these stations broadcast specialty programs and documentaries for Native American adults and youths. Special stations, such as the Center for Native American Public Radio, help coordinate the work of the Native American Public Radio System, which comprises 32 Native-owned public radio stations located across 12 states, along with the American Indian Radio on Satellite (AIROS) in Lincoln, Nebraska, and the Koahnic Broadcasting in Anchorage, Alaska (see the Native Networks website on Internet and Radio). Since 1992, the Koahnic Broadcasting Corporation has conducted an Alaska Native Youth Media Institute in Anchorage. High school students receive individualized media instruction from Native American media professionals, who teach students about writing, recording, and producing audio for radio broadcast and Internet distribution. At the end of each institute, students produce a radio feature program that is broadcast by Native American radio stations across the country.

Video

To meet the need for media images that do not misrepresent Native Americans, the National Museum of the American Indian has actively sponsored the work of young Native American media makers for the past 5 years. In a special teen video program of the 2000 Native American Film and Video Festival, three works produced by youth from the United States and Canada were screened in a special program with a Native American teen and youth audience (see the Native Youth Media section of the Native Networks website). The National Museum of the American Indian also holds workshops on youth video production. Several other media projects foster the work of Native American youth. The Four Directions Project provides Native American youth with skills in computer-based technology and video. The Video Program at the Indian Island School of the Penobscot Nation offers video production training for youth in grades 3 through 8. The program has produced award-winning short animated videos that incorporate Penobscot traditions from youth perspectives. The Native Visions Program at the Center for American Indian Health of the Johns Hopkins University is a media training program that brings media professionals to reservation communities to conduct media training workshops with teens. There are many other media projects that are offered to Native American youth.

In 1999, a study of Native American children's perceptions of race and class in the media, which centered on news and entertainment, was conducted (Children Now, 1999). Children from many Native American communities, from the reservations of New Mexico to urban centers in Seattle, participated in focus groups that were organized around understanding Native American children's perceptions of how race and class were portrayed in the media. These children concluded that they rarely saw other Native American children on television. When they saw Native American adults on television, they were portrayed as poor, drunk, living on reservations, or dancing around fires. Youth rarely saw Native American representatives in the news. Coverage in the newspapers offered unfavorable stories about Native Americans that centered on such things as fighting over land or casinos. The youth who were interviewed felt passionately about their desire to see themselves in positive and realistic Native American roles on the screen and in the press. They would like to see smart

Native American kids who go to school on the reservation or in the city, or strong boys or girls who do well at sports, or mothers and fathers who don't drink.

—Jeannette L. Johnson

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Four Directions Project: http://www.4directions.org

Index of Native American Media Resources on the Internet: http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NAmedia.html

Native American media: http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/media.html

Native Networks website: http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/green/index.htm

Native Networks, Internet and Radio: http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/purple/radio.htm

Native Networks, Media Projects: www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/yellow/fymm.htm

Native Networks, Native Youth Media: http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/youth_media.htm

NATURAL EXPERIMENTS, IMPACT ON COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

For many decades, most North Americans have habitually chosen watching television over other in-home leisure activities. TV viewing also displaces many leisure activities away from home, either in other dwellings or out of doors. A natural experiment in Canada provided the opportunity to compare the effects of television viewing in three towns assigned the pseudonyms of *Notel, Unitel,* and *Multitel.* Although their communications profiles were different, the three towns were similar in size, demographic variables such as socioeconomic status (SES), the cultural backgrounds of the residents, and the types of industry in the area. Each town had a population of about 700 but served an area four times as large through its schools and services. The purpose of the experiment was to compare Notel residents' participation in other leisure activities during the year before they first obtained television reception (Phase 1) with their participation 2 years later (Phase 2). The study also compared Notel's data with information from Unitel, with one Canadian public channel, and Multitel, with four (the same Canadian public channel and three American private channels).

This opportunity to conduct research on the effects of television was unusual and important because causal inferences can be made in natural experiments, provided that alternative possible explanations of the results (threats to internal validity) can be ruled out. This encyclopedia entry focuses primarily on the study conducted by Tannis MacBeth Williams and Gordon Handford (1986) with students in grades 7 through 12 in the three communities, with some results for adults included for comparative purposes.

The main goal of the study was to find out the extent to which residents of Notel, Unitel, and Multitel participated in their town's community activities. A method called ecological psychology, or behavior-settings analysis, was particularly well suited to this goal. In the 1950s, Barker and Wright (1955/1971) did a behavior-settings analysis of a town in the United States that they called *Midwest.* They theorized that each unit of the environment, or behavior setting, places limits on the range and type of behavior likely to occur there, sometimes for physical reasons but also because of social and other conventions. Their system provides a method for specifying environmental units that can be applied to entire communities such as Notel, Unitel, and Multitel, towns about the same size as Midwest.

In an initial visit to each town during Phase 1 and then again 2 years later, several people in each of the following categories were interviewed: retailers, town clerks and elected officials, officers of community clubs/organizations, recreation-commission personnel, school teachers, newspaper editor, police, clergy, and children. The interview information was used to determine the public behavior settings. Researchers also obtained copies of the previous year's community newspaper to find items referring to community activities, organizations, meetings, special events, and so on.

The list of activities and events unique to each town was organized into the 12 categories Barker and Wright used to describe Midwest. These were sports; open areas, such as parks, playgrounds, and swimming holes; businesses, such as stores and offices; civic activities, such as the post office and town hall; out-of-school educational activities such as music lessons and adult classes; meetings of clubs and other nonsports organizations; medical activities, such as visits to the hospital or doctor's office; community dances, parties, and suppers; special days, such as weddings, funerals, and elections; religious activities; entertainment, such as special movies, parades, and bingo; and other activities, such as fund-raising events, town cleanup campaigns. Information on these 12 categories was obtained using a questionnaire with about 275 items for each town in each phase. Another questionnaire assessed participation in 58 private leisure activities such as bicycling, reading books, and exercising. Whereas separate community activity behavior-setting questionnaires were developed for each phase of the study in each town, the same private leisure activity questionnaire was given in all three towns in both phases.

When completing the questionnaires, each person indicated whether and how she or he was involved in each activity during the preceding year. All students in grades 7 through 12 completed the questionnaires at school. Summarizing across the three towns and two phases, community activity data were obtained from 337 students ages 12 and under, 629 13-to-15-year-olds, and 382 16-to-19-year-olds. Private leisure activity surveys were completed by a total of 1,203 youths 18 and under. Adults completed an additional

1,044 community activity surveys and 900 private leisure activity surveys, summarizing across the three towns and two phases.

Taken together, the findings indicated that television has little if any impact on the number of community activities *available,* but it has a noticeable impact on *participation* in those activities. Summing across all 12 activity categories and all ages, involvement in community activities was greatest in the absence of TV in Notel and fell significantly following its arrival. There also was evidence of greater participation in the towns with one public TV channel, CBC (Notel in Phase 2, Unitel in both phases), compared to a town with four channels—CBC and the three major U.S. private networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC (Multitel in both phases). Television affected central as well as peripheral involvement in community activities. Television use was related to participation for some kinds of activities but not for others.

TV's negative impact was greatest for sports, and the effect was stronger for youths than for adults. For example, mean participation in sports by all youths (18 and under) in Phase 1 was 16.0 in pre-TV Notel, which was statistically significantly greater than participation in Unitel (11.6) and Multitel (6.3). The town differences among youth in Phase 2 were not statistically significant (11.6, 11.5, and 8.3). The evidence implicating TV in decreased attendance at community dances, suppers, and parties also was reasonably clear, and again, the effect for youths was stronger than for adults. In Phase 1, the pre-TV Notel mean (4.24) was higher than those for Unitel (2.56) and Multitel (2.37). In Phase 2, youth participation means in all three towns did not differ significantly (3.30, 2.60, 2.62). There also was some evidence that availability of TV decreased attendance at meetings of clubs and other nonsports organizations, but this was mainly the case for adults in the longitudinal sample, not for youths. The results for participation in the category, special days, revealed that before TV was available in Notel, adults there attended more special day events than did adults in Unitel and Multitel; 2 years later, participation in special community events had fallen for youths as well as adults in Notel.

One of the major age-related findings was that when TV was not available, the oldest group of Notel residents (age 56 and older) participated in their community's activities as much as did younger adults ages 20 to 35, although not as much as the Notel youths age 19 and under. For Unitel and Multitel in both phases, and for Notel in Phase 2, there was a significant drop in participation by adults age 56 and older by comparison with the preceding age group (36-to 55-year-olds). This was true for active participation in the sports category as well as overall participation in community activities. This suggests that the availability of television may affect the degree of age segregation characteristic of a community. If the older people attend fewer community activities, younger people who do attend have less opportunity to interact with older people. Greater age segregation may also have occurred for the category of community dances, parties, and suppers, except in this case, attendance decreased following the arrival of TV for Notel adolescents from Phase 1 to Phase 2. These age-related results suggest a qualitative component to the quantitative changes in community life associated with the impact of television.

It is clear from these results as well as those obtained by other researchers that TV's role in hindering or facilitating participation in other leisure activities is complex. Some activities—for example, active participation in sports—probably are displaced more or less directly, but others, especially those that can take place at the same time as TV viewing, probably are not. What are the processes involved in choosing to watch television versus playing a sport, reading, or attending a club meeting or community dance, party, or supper? In North America, watching TV is done more often out of habit or as a default activity than as a conscious decision to watch a particular program instead of doing one of many other possible activities. At least some of the time, for some people, watching television may displace other leisure activities because its ready availability makes the experience of finding something to do, something to make, or a game to play, alien. In other words, participation in leisure activities may operate in a self-perpetuating upward or downward spiral because the availability of TV attenuates the choice process.

It is important to acknowledge that some people have less choice than others because their access to other leisure activities is seriously limited by factors such as low socioeconomic status, illness, or other disability. For others, it may be safer to stay home, and alternatives to TV may or may not be available there.

These results regarding participation in community activities make it clear that television affects the leisure pursuits of children, adolescents, and adults. The results of other studies conducted in Notel,

Unitel, and Multitel, most notably those dealing with creativity, reading skills, problem-solving skills, and use of other media, indicate that some of the activities displaced by TV play an important role in fostering achievement, at least in certain areas and for certain people. By influencing how people play, TV may also influence how they think and work.

This study of participation in community activities in Notel, Unitel, and Multitel was cited by a prominent political scientist at Harvard University, Robert Putnam (2000), who analyzed the role of television in the decline in the United States at the end of the 20th century in social capital, including both civic participation and trust, particularly among young people.

—Tannis M. MacBeth

See also Notel, Unitel, Multitel Study; Research Methods, Natural Experiments

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NATURAL EXPERIMENTS, IMPACT ON CREATIVITY AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

Because children and adolescents spend a significant amount of time watching television, the effects of watching TV on students' reading skills, vocabulary, creativity, spatial ability, and IQ scores are of concern to parents, educators, researchers, and policymakers. Tannis MacBeth and colleagues took advantage of a natural experiment in three Canadian towns to do a before-and-after study of the effects of television on a variety of cognitive skills. The study examined the effects of television viewing in three towns assigned the pseudonyms of *Notel, Unitel,* and *Multitel.* Although their communications profiles were different, the three towns were similar in size (about 700), demographic variables such as socioeconomic status (SES), the cultural backgrounds of the residents, and the types of industry in the area.

In Phase 1, the researchers obtained data in Notel just before it obtained television reception for the first time, as well as in Unitel, which had had one Canadian (public) channel for about 7 years, and Multitel, which had had four channels (three from the United States as well as the same Canadian channel as Unitel) for about 15 years. They also obtained data in all three towns 2 years later in Phase 2 of the project. This encyclopedia entry focuses on the data that have particular relevance to education.

READING SKILLS

Many researchers have found that students who report watching more TV tend to be poorer readers and to do worse in school than students who watch less TV. On average, students who obtain lower scores on tests of general intelligence also tend to be poorer readers, to read less, to read different material, to do worse in school, and to watch more TV. The significant negative relationship between reading achievement and TV viewing, however, becomes smaller after the relationship of IQ to both TV and reading scores is removed. The difficulties in interpreting correlational data among the many variables related to TV and school achievement underscore the importance of the opportunity to study Notel students before and after TV reception became available because causal inferences can be made in natural experiments, provided that alternative possible explanations (threats to internal validity) of the results can be ruled out.

When first learning to read, children focus on decoding individual letters and words. Later, reading becomes more automatic and fluent, with a brief glance being sufficient to process an entire phrase. Raymond Corteen and Tannis MacBeth Williams (1986) examined this fluent/automatic phase of reading in all three towns in Phase 1, just before Notel obtained TV, gathering data on students in grades 2, 3, and 8, and 2 years later in Phase 2 on students in grades, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, and 10. Two years after Phase 2, grade 2 students in all three towns were reassessed. Each student was tested individually. Children looked into a device that controls the amount of time the item is available to be seen; they had to read a series of items from a standardized reading test that were shown very briefly. Some were words, some were

phrases, and some were nonsense words, that is, words that follow English spelling rules but are not true words, for example, *sked*. About 500 students in total were tested. In addition to this individual test of fluent reading skills, Phase 1 students completed a group reading test that assessed both comprehension and vocabulary. These group reading tests were given in all three towns to 813 students in grades 1 through 7 near the end of the school year, 6 months after the arrival of TV in Notel.

The results from the individual tests of fluent/automatic reading skills varied according to both gender and grade level. The pattern was clearer when the relationship of IQ scores to the other variables was controlled. When all of these findings were considered, the weight of the evidence indicated that the availability of television slows down the acquisition of fluent reading in the early elementary grades, but, once acquired, good reading skills are not lost. The group test results corroborated these individual test results. In Phase 1, Notel students in grades 2 and 3 obtained higher vocabulary and comprehension scores on the group reading test than did Unitel and Multitel students, who did not differ.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, for researchers to directly observe the relationship between use of TV and acquisition of reading skills, but the pattern of results from this and other studies is consistent with the following hypotheses offered by MacBeth (1996). When no TV is available, many or even most children may practice reading enough to become fluent in the early elementary grades, but learning to read is difficult for almost all children. They have to "crack the code," and beginning readers do so slowly, with great difficulty. At the initial decoding stage, they are unable to read for pleasure and still enjoy having others read to them. At this stage, reading is hard work, and watching TV is more fun for most students; those who have the most difficulty reading probably find TV most attractive. The brighter children without learning disabilities may obtain sufficient practice in school or may read more at home than other children, either on their own or with the help of others.

The rewards of learning to read probably are greater for those who acquire the skills more quickly. Parents who consider reading to be an important skill may provide more encouragement, or parents with a greater orientation to print than to other media may more often encourage and provide help with reading. By the later elementary grades, children who are poor readers have little opportunity to practice in school. The curriculum focuses on acquisition of reading skills only in the early grades, so beyond that point, poor readers are likely to read less outside school and to watch more TV. As other researchers have found and as noted earlier, in the later grades, use of TV, IQ scores, reading skills, and amount and type of reading are interrelated. In effect, the availability of TV and other media technologies may lead to an increase in the proportion of reading dropouts, especially among the less intelligent students in the early grades. However, this hypothesized influence of TV is indirect; the real cause is insufficient reading practice, so cutting down on time with TV might be necessary but would not be sufficient to produce good readers. The negative correlation between reading achievement and use of TV typically found in the later grades may be the outgrowth of a process that began in the early elementary grades, and not primarily due to the current influence of TV on reading skill. Older students who watch a lot of TV and read relatively little may do so because they are poor readers, rather than the other way round.

VOCABULARY

In addition to the vocabulary measure described above, which was part of the reading test given in a group (classroom) setting, the researchers obtained data for two other vocabulary tests. In Phase 1, 61 children in kindergarten and grade 1 in Notel and Unitel were individually given the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), a measure of receptive vocabulary in which the examiner says a word and the child points to the one of four drawings that depicts it. Also in Phase 1, 160 children in all three towns who were in grades 4 and 7 were given the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) vocabulary test. This task requires the child to provide definitions for a series of words the examiner says. Two years later, in Phase 2, the WISC vocabulary test was given to 284 students in grades 4, 6, 7, and 9. The results of the PPVT and WISC tests (as well as those for creativity discussed next) are described by Linda Harrison and Tannis MacBeth Williams (1986). There was no evidence to support the hypothesis that TV would have a positive effect on children's vocabulary, as no pattern in the results linked exposure to TV to the PPVT or WISC vocabulary scores, either positively or negatively.

CREATIVITY

The question of whether TV facilitates or inhibits various aspects of viewers' thinking, including creativity, has been much debated. Creativity is difficult to define and even more difficult to measure, especially in children, but there is substantial agreement that it includes both ideational fluency, that is, the ability to generate many ideas that fulfill certain requirements, and ideational originality, that is, the ability to generate unique or unusual ideas. The Notel, Unitel, and Multitel study examined both.

Children's creativity was assessed by Linda Harrison and Tannis MacBeth Williams (1986) with the alternate uses task, asking, for example, "Tell me all the different ways to use a newspaper." Scores were assigned for both the total number of appropriate responses (fluency) and the uniqueness/originality of each response. In Phase 1, a total of 160 children in grades 4 and 7 in the three towns were assessed. In Phase 2, 137 of the same students, now in grades 6 and 9 (the longitudinal sample), were reassessed, along with 147 students in grades 4 and 7 (the cross-sectional sample).

The results were clear, and the pattern was similar for the total number of ideas as well as their uniqueness and for both cross-sectional and longitudinal comparisons. Before their town had TV, Notel students had higher creativity scores on average than did students in both Unitel and Multitel. In Phase 2 when Notel had had TV for 2 years, however, the scores of Notel, Unitel, and Multitel students did not differ. From Phase 1 to Phase 2, only the scores of Notel students changed significantly, and they decreased.

These results indicate that TV viewing has a negative impact on children's creative thinking. This seems likely to be an indirect effect occurring because some other activities are displaced, for example, doing puzzles or playing games requiring multiple answers/solutions that might have facilitated creativity. Having more varied experiences in the absence of TV may make a difference. Television also may displace "doing nothing," and the latter may encourage reflection and thinking about ideas.

TV may also displace some activities that require deeper information processing. Gavriel Salomon (1983) has reported evidence that the amount of invested mental effort (AIME) required to watch North American TV is low. Children and adults know this and, according to Salomon, tend to watch TV in a relatively mindless as opposed to a more mindful way. Salomon contends that young children learn that TV requires only lower levels of information processing, that is, encoding (taking in information directly) and chunking (parsing or grouping information), and no mental elaboration. In other words, TV does not require working over or transforming information. Children and adults accustomed to using these relatively mindless processing skills with TV also may use them to process information in other situations, even when the skills are inadequate to the task. The content of TV also may provide relatively few models of divergent thinking (coming up with many plausible answers or solutions) as opposed to convergent thinking (one correct answer). In short, this set of hypotheses revolves around the notion that North American TV tends to be oriented more toward entertainment than toward reflective thinking and persistence, so TV viewing does not facilitate performance on tasks that require these skills.

SPATIAL ABILITY

Although the researchers had hypothesized that television might affect children's spatial ability because it requires viewers to become TV literate by learning to decode two-dimensional spatial representations of three-dimensional space, they found no evidence for either a positive or a negative effect of TV on spatial ability.

IQ SCORES

During Phase 1, group test IQ scores were obtained from the permanent school records of 631 students across the three towns. These scores were used primarily as a control when assessing the role of TV in relation to other variables potentially related to IQ, such as reading, but the researchers also conducted some other analyses to assess the relationships among IQ scores, school achievement, and use of print and other media.

IQ scores from individual tests administered by professionals are considered to be more valid and reliable than scores from group tests, in part because the latter depend on reading ability. As mentioned earlier, the vocabulary and spatial ability tests given to students in grades 4 and 7 in Phase 1 and in grades 4, 6, 7, and 9 in Phase 2 were the WISC Vocabulary and Block Design IQ tests.

The study found evidence that children's use of television and other media varies with IQ, as measured both individually and in group tests. Higher IQ students watched less TV and used more print media than did lower IQ students. One of the most intriguing findings in the entire Notel, Unitel, Multitel natural experiment concerned the relations among IQ scores, reading ability, print use, and the availability of TV. When TV was available in their town, substantial intercorrelations were found among children's IQ scores, reading skills, amount of reading, and type of material read, as has been typical of other research conducted since TV became widely available. In this natural experiment, however, when TV was not available, IQ was more independent of reading skill and print use. In Phase 1, Notel students' IQ scores were not related to their performance on an individual measure of fluent reading skill. In addition, although Notel students' group IQ scores were significantly related to their Phase 1 group test reading scores, they were less strongly related to those scores than was the case for Unitel and Multitel students. These results are consistent with MacBeth's hypothesis, discussed earlier, that one effect of TV is more reading dropouts.

—Tannis M. MacBeth

See also Notel, Unitel, Multitel Study; Research Methods, Natural Experiments

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NATURAL EXPERIMENTS, IMPACT ON GENDER ROLES

What are the effects of media portrayals on gender-related attitudes and beliefs? Content analyses of television and other media have consistently demonstrated since the 1950s that males are overrepresented, with two to three times as many male as female characters on TV. Both males and females are portrayed most often in traditional gender roles, that is, in stereotyped ways. Whereas it is relatively easy from a methodological point of view to document gender portrayals in various media, both quantitatively and qualitatively, it is substantially more difficult to document the effects of those portrayals. To the extent that viewers/readers/listeners are exposed to similar messages regarding gender through their real-life experiences and their exposure to various media, it may be impossible to isolate the influence of any particular medium on its users' attitudes and behavior. However, this entry describes two studies that do provide evidence of the impact of televised models and messages on children's perceptions of female and male gender roles and on female adolescents' dieting behaviors and their self-perceptions regarding their appearance.

EFFECTS OF TV ON GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES

The Notel, Unitel, Multitel Study by Tannis MacBeth and colleagues allowed for the isolation of the effects of televised portrayals of gender from other sources of gender-related messages by studying gender-role attitudes in three Canadian towns (given the pseudonyms *Notel, Unitel,* and *Multitel*) before and 2 years after TV was introduced in Notel. Although their communications profiles were different, the three towns were similar in size (about 700), demographic variables such as socioeconomic status (SES), the cultural backgrounds of the residents, and the types of industry in the area. This natural experiment compared the gender-role attitudes of Notel children with those of children in Unitel and Multitel.

In one segment of a wide-ranging natural experiment, Meredith Kimball (1986) focused on children's gender-role attitudes. She used the Sex-Role Differentiation Scale (SRD) to assess students' beliefs about the appropriate and typical behaviors of girls and boys

"your own age" (Peer Scale). The students also were asked to rate how frequently their own mother and father performed certain tasks (Parent Scale).

For the Peer scale, students rated each item on a scale from *1 (not true)* to *7 (very true).* There were 61 items spread across five subscales: traits (e.g., tough, hardworking), behaviors (e.g., do dishes, swear), job suitability when grown up (e.g., bus driver, clerk in a store, a judge), authority relations (e.g., do what their parents say), and peer relations (e.g., keep secrets their friends tell them). For each item, the child rated how typical that behavior, characteristic, or future suitability of a job was both for boys their own age and for girls their own age. Their score was the sum of the differences between the two gender ratings for all 61 items. This scale measures degree of sex typing, that is, the extent to which the child differentiated between male and female peers by gender-typing them. The data were checked for the possibility that a child would differentiate or gender-type in a nontraditional way, for example, rating girls their age higher than boys their age on "tough," but this never occurred.

For the Parent Scale, the same procedure was used for rating and scoring the 41 items, except in this case students were asked about their own mother's (or stepmother's) behavior and their own father's (or stepfather's) behavior. The Parent Scale has four subscales: activities (e.g., does the family laundry), discipline (e.g., sees to it that the children do their homework), support (e.g., helps you with things when you're having trouble with it), and power (e.g., has the most to say about where to go on family outings). Each item is rated on a 7-point scale from *1 (never)* to *7 (often)* for each parent.

The participants were all students in grades 6 and 9 in each of the three towns in both Phase 1 (just before Notel obtained television) and Phase 2 (2 years later). The total sample included 130 students in Notel, 135 in Unitel, and 166 in Multitel. Longitudinal data were not obtained from the same children (e.g., those in grades 6 and 9 in Phase 1 who were in grades 8 and 11 in Phase 2). They were told not to put their names on the questionnaires so that they would be completely anonymous.

To ascertain the generalizability of their findings from these three small towns to larger urban populations, the researchers also analyzed data obtained 8 months prior to Phase 1 from 105 students in grades 5 and 8 in Vancouver, Canada's third-largest city.

Taken together, the bulk of the evidence from the analyses of the Peer Scale indicated that television made students' perceptions and attitudes with regard to gender roles more strongly gender-typed, that is, more traditionally stereotyped. Before their town had TV, Notel students' perceptions of their peers were more egalitarian than those of students in Unitel and Multitel. Two years after the arrival of TV, Notel students' gender-role perceptions had become more sex-typed, so that in Phase 2 there were no statistically significant differences among the three towns. Of the 12 data points for the Peer Scale results, only two were anomalous: Unitel boys had very high scores in Phase 1, reflecting more sex-typed perceptions than boys in Multitel as well as in Notel, and Unitel girls' perceptions in Phase 1 were less gender-typed than those of girls in Multitel as well as in Notel. But 10 of the 12 data points revealed a pattern indicating that TV viewing contributes significantly to stereotyped gender-role attitudes.

With regard to perceptions of their own parents' behavior, there was no evidence that exposure to TV had any effect. The Parent Scale scores did not vary according to town or phase of the study. On average, boys in grade 6 reported less sharing of various household and child-rearing tasks by their parents than did girls, but there was no gender difference in the parent reports of grade 9 students.

The finding that exposure to TV resulted in more stereotypical attitudes regarding gender roles of their peers but had no effect on the gender-typing of their own parents' behavior is noteworthy. It could be interpreted as indicating that the TV gender portrayals have a greater impact on gender-typing than observations of their own parents' behavior.

The results for the Peer and Parent Scales for children who grew up with TV in Unitel and Multitel were very similar to those for children who had grown up with TV in Canada's third-largest urban city, supporting the generalizability of the results regarding the effects of TV.

EFFECTS OF TV ON EATING DISORDERS

A natural experiment that showed a media effect on a gender-related issue, eating disorders, was conducted by Anne E. Becker, a medical anthropologist from the United States who studied eating habits in Fiji.

Traditionally, robust body shapes for both women and men have been preferred there, reflecting the importance in their culture of generous feeding and voracious eating. Television arrived in Fiji in 1995, with one channel that primarily carried programs from the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom. In a prospective, cross-sectional, multi-wave study, Becker and her colleagues assessed two different sets of girls ages 15 to 19 years, the first 64 in 1995 within a few weeks of TV's arrival in Nadroga, and the other 65 in 1998. The proportion who reported ever having vomited to control weight increased from 0 to 11.3% over that period, and the proportion who scored high on a test of risk for disordered eating grew from 13% to 29%. In 1998, girls who lived in a house with a TV set were no more overweight than girls who lived in a house with no TV, but they were three times more likely to show symptoms of eating disorders. Three years after television arrived in Nadroga, 74% of the young women reported sometimes feeling "too big or fat," and 69% said they had dieted to lose weight. They also reported being interested in weight loss as a means of modeling themselves after the fictional TV characters they admired. The authors described their findings as reflecting an especially strong impact of television, given the long-standing cultural traditions that previously apparently protected the Fijians against purging, dieting, and body dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSION

All theories of gender-role development emphasize the importance of models. In both of these studies, researchers took advantage of a natural experiment to assess the effects of exposure to television on some aspect of gender roles, and in both cases, effects were evident, indicating that the impact of TV was sufficiently strong to be measurable over and above the impact of many other influences. Television may be an especially effective teacher of gender roles. North American children start watching TV when they are 2 years old, so TV provides more models than most young children encounter in real life.

—Tannis M. MacBeth

See also Notel, Unitel, Multitel Study; Research Methods, Natural Experiments

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NEWS, CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO

All forms of media have some effect on audiences who consume them. The nature and extent of the effect varies from one type of media to another, but all media impact their audiences in some manner. The news is not exempt from this universal media trait.

When children are exposed to news, whether print or broadcast, they experience a mix of effects. The overriding effect of children's exposure to news seems to be that they are better informed, more likely to understand how the world works, and better equipped to make sense of the challenges they will face in society than they would be without exposure to news.

It is possible for news coverage, particularly reports about violent, tragic, or otherwise disturbing events, to frighten, sadden, or confuse children. Like violence in entertainment media, violence in the news can, to some extent, desensitize children to violence, making them more accepting of it and, some would say, potentially more likely to behave violently. Others would disagree, saying that violence in the news is rarely presented in a way that is conducive to social learning of violent tendencies.

To maximize the benefit of children's exposure to news and to minimize potential negative effects, research has shown that parents should watch the news with their children, discussing and explaining what they see. Studies suggest that doing this will help children make more sense out of the news, put events into context, and probably increase their interest in news and current events.

A study conducted in 2002 by Stacy Smith of Michigan State University found children in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades understood television

news better than younger children, but the older children also found some news stories more upsetting than their younger counterparts did. It was probably their superior ability to understand the news that caused the older children to find certain stories more upsetting. However, this research shows that children in both age groups reported finding at least some news reports to be upsetting. Other research shows that television viewing in general can be upsetting to children and that exposure to news is proportionally less upsetting than exposure to other types of violent or action-filled programming.

Some of the most insightful information about children's exposure to news can be found in data from a study of 14- and 17-year-olds from 29 countries conducted in the year 2000 by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The IEA data suggest that children who are exposed to news, whether through television or newspapers, have a higher level of knowledge about civic events and issues than do children who are not exposed to news. In addition, the more exposure they have to news, both in newspapers and on television, the greater the level of their civic knowledge. However, the IEA study shows that exposure to television of all kinds is also positively correlated with an increase in civic knowledge. This pattern holds true for general television viewing up to 5 hours a day. For those who view more than 5 hours of television a day, the positive correlation does not persist.

The IEA study also shows that the strength of the correlation between exposure to news and level of civic knowledge is about equal for newspapers and television, meaning that regardless of how children are exposed to news, the same increase in civic knowledge occurs. Children, however, are much more likely to watch television news than to read a newspaper. Therefore, television news is probably involved more prominently in the association between exposure to news and increases in civic knowledge among children.

Taken collectively, these various research findings suggest that exposure to many kinds of media (including news) can frighten and disturb children but that media exposure is also positively correlated with increases in civic knowledge. In other words, the media may frighten, confuse, or disturb children, but these same media simultaneously help to inform children about the world around them. In addition, the research suggests that exposure to news, in particular, tends to disturb children less and inform them more than other kinds of media they might encounter, such as entertainment programming.

Many studies in psychology suggest the importance of parents being actively involved in their children's media consumption. Parents need to watch television (news included) with their children, discussing the meaning and implications of events seen there. The psychology literature also suggests that the news media can be used as educational tools and that learning can be augmented if news media are applied in the classroom as teaching tools.

A news report of a current event can serve as an ideal backdrop for a discussion with children about important issues of the day. Various universities, including Purdue University and North Carolina State University, have published research-based guides for parents who want to discuss with their children the events they see in news coverage.

Some researchers say terrorism and armed conflict are especially timely examples of news topics that parents should discuss and explain to their children. Judith A. Myers-Walls addressed this issue in North Carolina State University's *Forum for Family and Consumer Issues.* Myers-Walls suggests that parents should not avoid topics such as terrorism and conflict, even though those topics may be disturbing to children. Instead, parents should use news coverage as an opportunity to explain the reasons for and potential risks associated with violent events. Children who are exposed to the news as well as a thoughtful deconstruction of its meanings and implications are more likely have a better grasp of profound social issues as adults.

—Marc C. Seamon

See also Desensitization Effects; Mean World Syndrome; Media Education, Family Involvement in; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory; Television, International Viewing Patterns and; Television Violence

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NEWS, CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO

As the main source of information on current events, television news presents many complicated challenges to adults and children alike. Through the news, children are presented a variety of complex issues, in both verbal and graphic forms, about the familiar and the foreign, the domestic and the international. More specifically, natural catastrophes, war, rioting, terrorist attacks, and so forth are crisis periods when children around the world may experience a heightened sense of chaos, lack of control over their lives, and a great need for information about their world as well as assistance in making sense of what is happening and assurance that the future will be better. Some researchers have also raised a concern that accumulated exposure to violent news may contribute to the Mean World Syndrome, in which children cultivate a negative perspective on the world as a mean and dangerous place.

What challenges does the news pose for children's understanding of their world and for their emotional well-being? Children hear about, see, and must cope with many troubling, often frightening events that were once known only to adults. In attempting to understand these events, children have to assimilate the fragments of information they receive from the media and try to make sense of them. They have to deal emotionally with the suffering of others and with gruesome portrayals of atrocities. Such stimuli pose demanding cognitive challenges even for adult viewers of the news, and they are particularly challenging for younger people. Furthermore, children's skill, interest, and experience in making sense of news reports varies with their age, developmental level, media competence, and personal life experience.

Research on the development of children's understanding of news has argued that their interest in and consumption of news is limited. Children, so it seems, rarely mention news programs as something they watch regularly, and overall, they rate news very low on their list of favorite topics. Yet, other studies have documented the fact that even young children are exposed to news quite often, as either incidental viewers or as part of a family gathering, and that this behavior may be growing as the nature of news has changed to a more available, dynamic, visual, and intensive type of coverage, particularly at times of social crisis. Interest in news has been related to increasing age, gender (more boys than girls following the traditional association of masculinity with the public sphere), and class (more interest among the educated and middle class).

Questions about the place news might have in children's lives have been developed through three complementary lines of inquiry.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The most extensive line of inquiry has attempted to understand the impact that news has on the emotional development of children, provoking reactions such as fear, anxiety, anger, physiological reactions, and sleep disturbance. Parents report that news programs are distressing to children, and their reactions have been consistent with developmental differences: Younger children are more fearful of news that looks and sounds scary, and over the years, they gradually become more fearful of news dealing with more abstract concepts of threat and danger (e.g., wars and disasters). Studies have also demonstrated that children experience negative emotional responses not only to the television coverage of traumatic events (such as the assassination of President Kennedy, the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster, the Oklahoma bombing, the Gulf War, 9/11 attacks on the United States, and the 2003 war on Iraq), but also to routine news depicting violence and disasters. In addition, studies also suggest that the danger's perceived proximity to the child and parental discourse and attitudes toward the event play significant roles in mediating children's fear and anxiety reactions. More specifically, it was found that younger children are consoled more efficiently by physical means (e.g., a hug, a favorite snack), whereas older children are more receptive to cognitive strategies (e.g., comments that the danger is far away or that the military is prepared to face it).

UNDERSTANDING OF NEWS

A second line of inquiry has examined children's understanding of news and the knowledge attained from watching, reading, and listening to news reports. In contrast to adults, children are more likely to comprehend televised news rather than other forms of news, research has found. Similar studies examined the development of children's ability to distinguish between television fact and fiction based on the acquisition of two complementary areas of knowledge and skills—those related to the real world and those related to the world of television. Preschoolers could distinguish news from other television genres and identify it as an adult genre of no interest to them. Kindergartners were already able to perceive news as dealing with important, real, and relevant issues that are "bad" and "sad" in nature, and their understanding seems to be shaped by the local media culture.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Finally, studies have sought to determine the contribution of news media to the political socialization of children and adolescents as well as to their developing sense of civic awareness. These studies have focused on documenting the central role television plays as part of the political environment in which children are being socialized and the potential that news has as a major information source through which children learn about politicians, political systems, and political agenda. In addition, news reports were found to influence children's attitudes in specific areas, such as development of stereotypes regarding minorities and enemies or political positions toward social and political conflicts. Younger children are more dependent on television; as they mature, newspapers are added as a source of information about news and current events on television. Television remains the central source of political information for young viewers from lower social economic classes.

It is interesting to note that those children and adolescents with more interest in news and current affairs, obtained in part via the media, tended also to discuss it more within their family. As a result, socializing agents reinforce one another. However, adolescents did not necessarily adopt their parents' habits of consuming news and political contents via the media, nor their parents' political attitudes.

No clear relationship has been found between the influence of news in shaping knowledge and attitudes and their practical application in various forms of political activities. However, several studies have demonstrated that given the opportunity, children may also become active participants in public discussion of current events through their posting of their feedback and opinions on news-related websites designed especially for them.

—Dafna Lemish

See also Mean World Syndrome; Media Education, Political Socialization and; News, Children's Exposure to; Violence, Effects of

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NEWS, PORTRAYALS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN

A growing cadre of scholars across a range of academic disciplines have taken up the study of the representational politics guiding mediated portrayals of youth, much of it focusing on news coverage of children and adolescents. In a nutshell, their research

has documented a tendency on the part of journalists to define youth as a problem (framing youth either *as risks* or *at risk* themselves) while simultaneously silencing young people in stories about them.

In his book, *Framing Youth,* Mike Males reports how newspapers and magazines systematically distort the truth about teenagers. For example, comparing *Los Angeles Times* coverage of youth violence in general and homicide in particular with the actual rate of such crimes committed by youth, Males provides evidence that the coverage is three times as extensive as would be warranted by actual youth arrests for violent crimes and five times as extensive as actual homicide involvement by youth. In addition, the coverage of youth violence is nine times more extensive than that of adult violence. Similarly, in their year-long study of local California newspapers' coverage of youth violence, John McManus and Lori Dorfman document not only that coverage of youth violence is excessive but also that such coverage is decontextualized in that it ignores broader social causes and solutions for youth violence.

Besides presenting youth as risks to the larger society, news coverage often frames youth as *at* risk from a range of social ills. In one of the only studies focusing on news coverage of adolescent girls, Sharon R. Mazzarella and Norma Pecora found that U.S. newspapers frame girls as a generation in crisis—a crisis consisting primarily of low self-esteem and poor body image. Moreover, newspapers create a scenario in which girls are the victims of these problems and desperately needing adult intervention to save them. These findings are supported in Lynne Y. Edwards's recent study examining U.S. newspaper coverage of girls and the Internet in which she found that newspapers frame girls as victims of both cyber-predators and of technology itself—in both cases needing protection from adults, notably law enforcement officials.

According to research conducted on behalf of the FrameWorks Institute, local television news coverage of teens also is characterized by its emphasis on teen lives as being dangerous and violent. By focusing on such topics as crime and car accidents, the study argues that television news helps perpetuate negative stereotypes about teens. This finding is even more pronounced regarding youth of color. In a study of California television coverage of juvenile crime, Travis Dixon, Daniel Linz, and Cristina Azocar (2000) document that African American and Latino youth are more likely to be portrayed as breaking the law than are white youth. Interestingly, this phenomenon has not gone unnoticed by youth themselves. In a Children Now study, some 1,200 youth between the ages of 10 and 17 reported seeing white and Asian teens covered by TV news in a mostly positive manner and African American and Latino teens in a mostly negatively manner.

The tendency to link negative behavior with youth of color was underscored in coverage of the Columbine High School shootings in April 1999—coverage that featured headlines announcing: "If It Could Happen Here, Many Say, It Could Happen Anywhere," basically asking how could such an incident could happen in white, middle-class suburbia. The implication, according to Henry Giroux, is that this level of violent behavior is to be expected of urban, poor, or African American and Latino youth, but not of their white suburban peers. Giroux argues that white, middle-class children are afforded the assumption of innocence—in other words, we are shocked when they commit such crimes. When they do engage in such behavior, as in the case of Columbine, news coverage and public reactions are characterized by a wave of "soul searching" and the tendency to look for outside causes such as popular culture to explain what went wrong.

The highest profile case in a string of school shootings, Columbine generated extensive news coverage and prompted the nation to engage in a level of soul-searching regarding youth violence previously unmatched. In an analysis of network television news coverage during the week immediately following each of eight recent school shootings, the *Media Monitor* found that Columbine generated the highest amount of coverage, some 151 stories and just under 4 hours of airtime during that week. Interestingly, across the coverage of all eight school shootings, violent content in popular culture—including movies, music, television, video games, and so on—was often blamed. Similarly, in an analysis of newspaper coverage of Columbine from around the world, Erica Scharrer, Lisa Weidman, and Kimberly Bissell demonstrated the news media's tendency to blame other forms of popular culture for the shootings at Columbine High School. Such findings reflect American society's historical tendency to fear the links between youth and popular culture—a fear often played out in news coverage of youth.

Although the literature on news coverage of youth is growing, the vast majority of these studies focus on coverage of teenagers and not children. A Children

Now study found that children receive little attention in local TV news stories. When they are covered, however, it is most likely to be a crime story, and children are most likely to be presented as the victims. Moreover, the study found that children are quoted in less than 20% of the stories about them. Such stories are more likely to rely on quotes from adults including parents, doctors, law enforcement officials, and the like.

Journalists might reasonably be reluctant or unable to speak with young children directly; however, the failure to quote youth themselves is found even in stories about teenagers, according to numerous studies. This phenomenon has prompted Larry Grossberg to label youth as "the most silenced population in society" (1994, p. 25), with youth having little or no agency or voice in stories about their lives.

—Sharon R. Mazzarella

See also Adolescents, Media Portrayals of; African Americans, Media Images of; Children Now; Ethnicity Race, Stereotyping Latina/os, Media Images of

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NOTEL, UNITEL, MULTITEL STUDY

What effects, if any, does TV have on viewers' attitudes and behavior? Does it affect their reading skills, creativity, vocabulary, aggressive behavior, gender-role attitudes, participation in other leisure activities, or use of other media? The Notel, Unitel, Multitel study offered an unusual opportunity in the form of a natural experiment that enabled researchers to avoid a major "chicken and egg" problem faced by researchers in examining such questions: how to determine whether viewers are affected by TV in the areas of interest, whether viewers who differ on these dimensions use TV differently, or whether both influences occur in a transactional relationship. This problem prompted the U.S. Surgeon-General's Commission to lament in 1972 that it was no longer possible to do a before-and-after TV study in a North American community because by then, virtually all communities had television access. The natural experiment represented by the Notel study did, however, enable researchers to make causal inferences with regard to the effects of television, provided that careful consideration was given to alternative possible explanations for the findings. Cook and colleagues (1990) contend that this type of research, which they call *untreated control group design with pretests*, usually produces interpretable causal results because it involves both pretests and posttests for nonequivalent control groups (in this case, Unitel, Multitel) as well as for the group (Notel) that is the focus of the natural experiment.

In July 1973, not long after the U.S. Surgeon-General's report was published, Tannis MacBeth Williams learned of a Canadian town that still did not have television reception but would be getting it soon,

and she decided, with her faculty and graduate student colleagues, to take advantage of this exciting, unusual research opportunity. The details of the methodology and results of this research have been published as a book (Williams, 1986) and summarized in a chapter (MacBeth, 2001). This encyclopedia entry provides a brief overview of the project.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

MacBeth and colleagues chose *Notel* as the pseudonym for the town initially without TV. If they had studied only Notel, however, they would not have known whether any changes that occurred following the introduction of TV to Notel were due to the availability of TV or to some other event that occurred during the period of the study. They needed at least one control community for comparison. Notel residents suggested a town about an hour's drive away, which the researchers called *Unitel* because it had had one channel, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's public network, CBC, for about 7 years. Notel was going to obtain that same channel (and only that) through the installation of a new repeating transmitter. Residents of Notel and Unitel agreed that the towns were otherwise similar. The researchers wondered, however, whether TV effects might vary depending on whether viewers could watch only one versus several channels, so they added a second control town. The place they called *Multitel* had had four channels for 15 years: CBC and the three private U.S. networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC. The three towns were similar in size, demographic variables such as socioeconomic status (SES), the cultural backgrounds of the residents, and the types of industry in the area. Each town had a population of about 700 but served an area four times as large through its schools and services.

One important feature of this study is that people in Notel were not self-selected; that is, they had not chosen to live there because TV was unavailable. Indeed, they had lobbied very hard to get a repeating transmitter installed by the CBC. Comparisons between families who choose to have or not to have a particular media technology are a problem because these two groups also differ on many other dimensions. These differences make it impossible to rule out the likelihood that effects apparently due to presence or absence of that technology are not really due to some other "third variable." This is a major problem for researchers studying all new technologies, television in the 1950s and 1960s and, more recently, personal computer and Internet use. It usually takes years before a new technology penetrates a community to the point that almost everyone uses it. People of higher SES invariably acquire new technologies earlier than those of lower SES, so it is difficult to rule out SES as an alternative possible explanation of some of the results. This was not an issue in Notel in 1973. Residents knew what TV was and watched it when they were elsewhere, but most could not watch it regularly. The median number of hours watched per week in Notel before TV arrived (Phase 1) was zero. By comparison, the Phase 1 median for Unitel was 23.5 hours per week and for Multitel, 29.3 hours.

Some reports by others on the Notel, Unitel, Multitel study have described Notel as an isolated community in northern Canada. This is wrong. Like Unitel and Multitel, Notel is in southern Canada and was not isolated. This is important because the effects of various media in an isolated community that is accessible only by air or by sea, as is true of many small Canadian communities, may well be different from the effects in a nonisolated community. Notel would have had television sooner, but the transmitter that brought TV to Unitel 7 years earlier had been ineffective in Notel. Although it is only an hour's drive from Unitel, Notel is located in a valley in such a way that most residents could not pick up the transmitter's signal most of the time, although Unitel residents could do so. Notel, like Unitel, had highway and train service going in two directions. In anticipation of the installation of the new repeating transmitter in the late fall of 1973, almost all Notel residents had already obtained TV sets.

All three towns were studied just before Notel obtained television reception (Phase 1) and again 2 years later (Phase 2). The 2-year interval was chosen because it seemed long enough that any effects of TV would be clearly evident, but not so long that other major historical changes were likely to occur in Canadian society, either in general or in any of the three towns. Also, the longer the interval from Phase 1 to 2, the more likely it would be that residents would move away. Attrition is always a problem in longitudinal studies in which the same people are studied on more than one occasion, especially if there is differential attrition among the groups. In this study, overall attrition from Phase 1 to 2 was relatively low, 28.5%, and did not differ significantly for the three towns.

TOPICS AND PARTICIPANTS

The Notel researchers chose to study topics that had been identified in previous research as potentially influenced by television, either positively or negatively. Many of the studies in this project focused on children, either elementary or high school students, but some focused on adults. Unfortunately, resources to study preschool children were not available.

For most topics, the study included children and adults at more than one age level. With three towns studied in both Phase 1 and Phase 2, this provided a minimum of 12 data points for each topic, for each measure (e.g., physical aggression, fluent reading skill), with more than one measure used for most topics. For each topic, researchers were therefore looking for a pattern of results that made sense in relation to the availability of television.

For almost all topics, both cross-sectional and longitudinal comparisons were made. Comparisons between different people studied on the same occasion are cross-sectional, for example, comparisons among children in Notel, Unitel, and Multitel within Phase 1 and similar comparisons within Phase 2. The study also included longitudinal analyses of the same children, comparing their Phase 1 and 2 scores on the same or a similar measure, for example, Notel children's creativity scores in Phase 1 when they were in grade 4 or 7 with those same children's creativity scores 2 years later in Phase 2 when they were in grade 6 or 9. For this type of analysis, researchers also checked to see that the Phase 1 scores of children who were available to be restudied in Phase 2 did not differ from the Phase 1 scores of children who were not available in Phase 2 because of attrition. This was important because in some other longitudinal research on children and media, attrition from the first to subsequent measurements differed for those low versus high on the measure; for example, attrition was greater for children who initially were high rather than low in aggressive behavior because they left school or changed schools, perhaps in part because of their aggressiveness.

GENERALIZABILITY OF FINDINGS

Notel, Unitel, and Multitel are three small towns. How representative are they? Several aspects of the findings are reassuring in this regard. First, the study replicated results obtained by other researchers for urban samples in the United States and elsewhere. For example, boys were found to be on average more physically aggressive than girls; the mean WISC Block Design score for boys was higher than for girls; boys on average held more stereotypical attitudes about gender roles than did girls; women obtained higher person-orientation scores and lower thing-orientation scores than did men; ideational fluency and originality creativity scores were strongly and positively correlated; creativity and intelligence scores were relatively independent; and the TV viewing habits of children and adults in the three towns were comparable to those reported by others. Second, the mean performance of Notel, Unitel, and Multitel students on IQ tests that had been previously standardized on representative U.S. or Canadian samples was similar to the norms for those tests. Third, scores obtained with the gender-role attitude measure in Unitel and Multitel were in the same range as scores on this measure for an urban sample in Vancouver, Canada's third-largest city. Most important, the study results tend to confirm and extend, rather than to contradict, findings obtained in field and laboratory studies by other North American and Western European researchers.

CONCLUSION

In designing this research, the researchers hypothesized that TV influences its viewers in many ways, both positively and negatively, based on previous research and theory. The natural experiment provided by the imminent arrival of TV in Notel and comparisons with Unitel and Multitel provided an opportunity to measure the effects of TV over and above the many other influences that operate in naturalistic settings. In brief, TV had a negative effect on creativity; the acquisition of reading skills in the early elementary grades; participation in several types of community activities (e.g., sports) by adolescents and adults; students' attitudes regarding gender roles, which became more strongly and stereotypically sex-typed; children's physically and verbally aggressive behavior, for both boys and girls and for children initially low as well as those initially high in aggression. There was neither any supportive nor any contradictory evidence for the hypothesis that TV would have a positive impact on vocabulary, spatial ability, field independence, and fineness of information processing. There also was no positive or negative evidence regarding

participation in certain kinds of community activities (e.g., religious, medical), although, as mentioned earlier, there was evidence of a negative impact for some other kinds of community activities, such as active participation in sports.

No single study is definitive. Laboratory experiments, field experiments, observational studies in field settings, and natural experiments such as the Notel, Unitel, and Multitel study provide complementary kinds of evidence regarding the effects of television and other media on attitudes and behavior. The results, when added to the converging evidence from other research over many years, indicate that TV does have measurable effects on its viewers. The hypothesis of no effects is no longer tenable. No researchers would argue that TV is the only or most important influence for any of the topics studied, but over and above the myriad other sources of influence, TV plays a role that is measurable on average, despite the many individual differences among viewers.

—Tannis M. MacBeth

See also Natural Experiments, Impact on Community Activities; Natural Experiments, Impact on Creativity and School Achievement; Natural Experiments, Impact on Gender Roles; Research Methods, Natural Experiments; and Violence, Natural Experiments and

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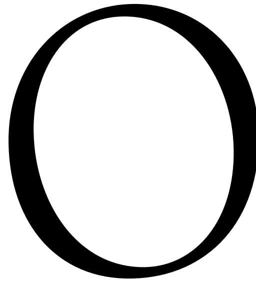

OBESITY

Obesity is one of the biggest health threats many children face in the modern world. Its incidence has risen so dramatically in recent years that it has been called an epidemic. Obesity dramatically increases the risks of disease (in particular type 2 diabetes) and even death in both children and adults. It has been estimated that it is perhaps the biggest threat to public health and organized health care in many countries of the world.

Several studies have found a relationship between watching a lot of television at an early age and higher scores on the weight to height ratio (known as the *body mass index*) in adulthood. Much of this research is based on large cohorts of young people that have been followed over time. A curvilinear relationship between video game use and obesity has also been demonstrated. Several explanations between media use and obesity have been explored, although more research is needed to decide whether reducing media exposure makes any difference in fighting this major threat to children's health.

EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

There are four possible explanations of the relationship between media exposure and obesity.

Displacement

The displacement hypothesis suggests that the pathway from television to obesity is indirect. Television viewing displaces more-active leisure activities, thus leading to a decrease in calorie-burning behaviors. Energy expenditure is reduced because behaviors requiring more energy are displaced by the sedentary behavior of TV viewing. There appears to be some but not much evidence of a direct relationship. TV viewing appears to be unrelated to activity levels. It is interesting to note that some sedentary media consumption behaviors (such as reading) do not appear to elicit concern.

Reduced Metabolism

Some authors believe that watching television induces a kind of passive physical state. One laboratory experiment showed, for instance, that rest metabolic rate was lower in children who watched television than in children who just rested. Video game use has been linked to *increased* metabolic rate because of the excitement it induces. If television viewing reduces metabolic rate, this means that viewing TV has a larger effect on body mass than many other nonactive behaviors.

Encouraging Energy Intake

Children are constantly exposed to advertising and marketing messages about food. Many messages encourage young people to consume high-energy foods with low nutritional value. There is some evidence that exposure to commercial messages increases the intake of unhealthy foods.

Increased Energy Intake

A number of studies show that eating snacks and drinking soft drinks are common behaviors in TV-viewing children. One study found that the daily intake of drinks and snacks while watching television amounted to about 19% of the average energy allowance in boys and about 14% in girls, although the actual numbers are likely to be culture specific. Snacking behavior accompanying television viewing thus appears to be the equivalent of an extra meal a day.

DISCUSSION

These four explanations of the relationship between media use (studied mainly with regard to television) and obesity (defined mainly as body mass index) are not mutually exclusive. To some extent, all four of them may influence body weight. Moreover, the relationship between body size and media use is only part of the problem. Even if media use does not increase weight, other effects remain possible. Television viewing has been associated with both snacking and meal skipping. This may explain why the relationship between television viewing and body mass index is smaller than might be expected: It is possible that those kids who eat many snacks when watching TV also skip many regular meals. Total caloric intake may, therefore, not be influenced by TV viewing, although nutritious food is displaced by less nutritious snacks and soft drinks. This could help explain the negative relationship between media use and health reported by many of the studies.

The number of published papers in this area is testimony to the fact that the study of media effects on obesity has become an emerging field. A number of issues still need to be resolved. First, both food consumption frequency and media use are difficult to measure accurately. Both the exposure and the outcome variables thus suffer from misclassification, which is bound to bias the results of any study considerably.

Second, this new field lacks interdisciplinary cooperation. Many epidemiologists have looked at television from a medical perspective, and many communication scholars have looked at obesity from a media research perspective. Both approaches sometimes lead to simplification of one side of the issue. Media scholars tend to be vague about defining determinants and outcomes while creating complex models that are difficult to prove empirically, but medical scholars tend to simplify the determinants and produce models based on stimulus-response theories of media effects.

Much work remains to be done to establish whether media use does lead to obesity and which processes explain such a relationship.

IS INTERVENTION OR PREVENTION NECESSARY?

Many authors suggest that reducing television viewing and computer game play could be an element of prevention (preventing the development of new cases of obesity) or intervention (reducing the number of existing cases of obesity). Both of these media consumption behaviors are expected to be major causes of widely reported decreases in activity levels of children in many countries. Reducing the time spent with these media should stop the displacement process and could have a place next to other types of intervention such as school-based programs or nutrition information campaigns. Some interventions have been successful, but overall the results are disappointing. Increasingly the solution to childhood obesity appears to be medication and even surgery.

—Jan Van den Bulck

See also Eating Disorders; Eating Habits, Media Influence on; Food Advertising, Influence of; Physiological Arousal; Product Placements, Food; Public Health Campaigns

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OBSCENITY

Obscenity is omnipresent in today's world. Even casual observers of American culture recognize that today's media are rife with depictions or references to acts of violence and explicit sexuality as well as profane language. In addition to such expressions or portrayals, there exists a massive pornography industry. In 2001, Frank Rich wrote in a *New York Times Magazine* article that Americans spend $10 billion to $14 billion per year on pornography, including pay-per-view movies on cable and satellite, phone sex, in-room hotel movies, sex toys, pornographic magazines, and pornographic websites. Although critics across the political spectrum—from the leading conservative Irving Kristol to the feminist Catherine McKinnon—are alarmed at what this says about the United States, its citizens, and its culture, defenders cite the First Amendment right to free speech in behalf of the unfettered dissemination of what often amounts to pornography. Studies indicate that children on the average view as many as 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence during their elementary school years alone. The prevalence of images and messages of explicit sex and violence strikes many social critics as contributing to a wholesale culture of obscenity.

Popular culture now serves as a primary agent of socialization for children and adolescents, raising serious questions not only about individual programs or messages but also about their collective impact during crucial early periods of character formation and psychological development. Even a brief immersion in today's popular culture reveals the great extent to which obscene language and images have become everyday phenomena. Consideration of some relevant historical developments indicates how a culture of obscenity caught hold and came to dominate a life-world into which the young are introduced at earlier and earlier ages.

By the late 20th century and early 21st century, obscenity in visual images, language, and other forms (song lyrics, for instance) had escaped the boundaries of the pornography industry itself, which hitherto had been somewhat cordoned off from mainstream America. No longer the preserve of separate red light districts, so-called adult bookstores and movies went mainstream, and material once deemed pornographic appeared everywhere: daytime to prime-time television programs, music CDs, and Internet sites. The signs of a changed notion of the boundary between public and private were omnipresent: the appearance of lingerie shops in shopping malls; the display of models wearing only their underwear in full-page advertisements in the *New York Times,* on billboards, or on the sides of buses; and the crotch-grabbing and skimpily clad pop rock stars catering to preteens.

Parents who view the tenor of contemporary popular culture with dismay find that it is not only advertisers and other companies that help lower the standards of decency, but other parents as well. These parents, for instance, help host theme birthday parties where youngsters dress as pop stars, and they purchase violent video games as gifts for their own children, allow them to view uncounted violent scenes on television cartoons and DVDs, and permit them to dress in T-shirts with antisocial messages or depictions of scantily clad celebrities. Some parents' rationale for such acquiescence is that children desire these things, just as many retailers contend that they merely provide what consumers want. As a result, those who seek to limit what children are exposed to—inappropriate language, literal sexuality, and depictions of brutal or meaningless violence—confront a larger culture that no longer recognizes limits as valid.

BLURRING BOUNDARIES: ROOTS OF THE CULTURE OF OBSCENITY

Sociologist Philip Rieff wrote about the long-term historical transformation in the West from a religious culture to a therapeutic anti-culture. In earlier religious cultures, the renunciation of instinct was achieved in the name of a greater communal purpose, and sacrifice was made worthwhile by the cultural attainments and participation; this allowed for the sublimation of selfish impulses. In the contemporary era, a cult of impulse release undermined inherited notions of permission and restraint that are the foundation of culture. Whereas older religious traditions had a profoundly consoling aspect—helping to save the individual from excess and isolation—the new sensibility not only mandated self-expression and the unfettered pursuit of desire as the ultimate purpose of life but fostered the creation of endless new desires. Ostensibly therapeutic, the new anti-culture actually removed the conditions for satisfaction, which Rieff thought could be found only in the bond between the

self and something beyond or outside it. Legitimating and exacerbating wants and needs, chronic therapy trumped the logic of outside commitments, thus simultaneously removing the sources of limitation and satisfaction of impulse.

Historian Rochelle Gurstein gives a detailed portrait of the decline of the "reticent" sensibility characteristic of 19th-century America and the rise of a culture of "exposure" in the early 20th century. During the Victorian era, Americans could appeal to notions of common sense, discretion, judgment, and the like because they could distinguish clearly the separation between private and public life. Gurstein, like political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain and others, argues that contemporary life has witnessed a merging of these two spheres, to the detriment of each. When brought into the full light of day, aspects of private life suffer from trivialization and desacralization, and public life loses its weight and integrity. For those who cannot put personal concerns aside for the common good, civic engagement becomes a mere excuse for the pursuit of self-aggrandizement. Impartial, shared moral standards give way to what philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre called *emotivism,* a perspective that makes subjective emotional preference the only criterion of judgment.

Christopher Lasch's notion of the "culture of narcissism" helped capture the strange predicament of the modern self. On the one hand, the self has sources of ostensible satisfaction at its disposal as never before because the notion that its impulses require taming no longer applies. On the other, its pathological inability to separate itself from objects and persons in the outside world means that the self can never attain satisfaction through engagement with anything truly other than itself.

One way to think about ways to recover a sense of proper, legitimate, and ultimately gratifying limits on the self and its instinctual designs is to revisit the issue of what makes something obscene. The question today is not only what should be considered adult-rated sexual material or pornography, which many would define through practices or ratings based on mere age appropriateness, but how to think about the deeper vulgarity, perversity, or vacuity of the culture at large.

THE DEFINITION AND COSTS OF OBSCENITY

In his book *Obscenity and Public Morality,* Harry Clor located the essence of obscenity in the transgression of the private/public boundary. Like Gurstein, who drew on his ideas, Clor argued that making public what properly belongs in the private realm constitutes an imposition on our sense of intimacy, often reducing intimate acts and understandings to their purely physical manifestations. Obscene materials are those that deliberately stir up lascivious impulses, gratuitously or graphically associate sexuality with extreme violence, or demonstrate violent harm of an individual with no real educational intent, for instance, in the service of science or art. MTV videos are one obvious example of this tendency to couple violence with sex.

By this standard, much of what passes for mainstream or popular fits into the category of obscenity. The cumulative effect of the culture of obscenity is objectification and dehumanization. The uniqueness and completeness—the integrity of the human person—and particular personal contexts in which one individual experiences a shared world of affection with another, or experiences pain and suffering, is lost. The limited human scale, mystery, and context of physical love and affection—as well as violence and death—is violated by the sheer quantity and repetition of depictions and references as well as the cold examining eye. The repetition of messages and images, as well as the too-close details, deadens the senses rather than stimulating them as promised. The culture of obscenity, rather than speaking to a lusty embrace of humanness, reduces human beings to objects, degrades profound aspects of human experience, and signifies an inability to experience real feeling rather than the superhuman capacity it advertises.

—Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn

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ONLINE MEDIA, AGENCY AND

In this day and age of avatars and conversational agents, it has become extremely important to understand the psychological locus and importance of perceived human agency in our mediated interactions. There are two ways in which agency is treated in the literature on communication technologies—(1) as robotic entities, either hardware or software related, that perform tasks for the user, often autonomously (e.g., interface agents that search for information on the Internet, conversational agents with whom users can carry on a dialogue), and (2) as online representations of offline human beings (e.g., avatars, screen names). Although technologically distinct, these two notions of agency may be psychologically indistinguishable to the user, given findings in recent research.

RESPONDING TO ONLINE AGENTS

As Nass, Lombard, Henriksen and Steuer (1995) demonstrate, human beings have an innate tendency to anthropomorphize technologies, both physically and psychologically. An individual's tendency to anthropomorphize is shown to predict his or her acceptance of computers in routinized (e.g., telephone operator), interpretive (e.g., novelist), and personal (e.g., judges) roles. Sundar (2004) showed that the level of psychological anthropomorphism even predicted a tendency to be loyal toward particular computer terminals. Reeves and Nass (1996) argue that even when technological interfaces do not expressly involve anthropomorphic cues or representations, human beings are hardwired to respond to communication technologies in social ways. Sundar and Nass (2000) call this tendency *source orientation* and demonstrate that users make social attributions directly to machines as if they are autonomous information and communication sources, without needing to invoke an underlying human agency such as the programmer or networker.

Sundar and Nass (2001) proposed a typology of online media sources by suggesting not just that traditional visible senders or gatekeepers of information are considered sources, but that the medium (technological source) and even the receivers (audience as source and self as source) can be construed as an independent source. In their experiment, they showed that users' perceptions of news content attributed to these different types of online sources were significantly different, implying that people are able to psychologically distinguish between professional journalists as gatekeepers and algorithms (as in Google News) as selectors of our information, and between themselves as source (e.g., portal sites) and other users as a collective source (e.g., collaborative filtering systems such as those used by Amazon.com wherein others' behavior is conveyed as an input for decision making).

However, user responses to these sources are based not always on effortful processing of source characteristics but on mental shortcuts *(cognitive heuristics),* which can be triggered by simply invoking the name of the source. For example, Sundar, Knobloch-Westerwick, and Hastall (in press) show that the computer as a source can trigger the *machine heuristic,* emphasizing objectivity in information selection and absence of ideological bias. But the operation of such heuristics is largely dependent on the cues embedded in the interface as well as content (Sundar, 2006). If an online chat bot (short for *chatterbot,* a program designed to simulate intelligent conversation) has a visibly human presence on the interface and is Caucasian and female (e.g., Ramona on http://www.kurzweilai.net), then users are likely to factor her race and gender into their interactions with this bot and their perceptions of the content it delivers. In fact, anthropomorphic agents attempt to approximate real humans in their outward appearance, with the use of such design elements as animation, gesture, natural language communication, animation, and personality—ingredients that, according to Heckman and Wobbrock (2000), form the foundation of "a dangerous illusion," with potential for powerful persuasion through unethical, if not illegal ways.

PERSONAL AGENCY ONLINE

Aside from persuading users to assign human agency to nonhuman entities, modern computer-based media, especially online media, allow users to express and experience a greater sense of personal agency by allowing them to make a priori specifications of the kinds of content they would like to receive. Called customization, this feature allows each and every user to be unique and distinct (Kalyanaraman & Sundar, 2006). Sundar (in press) argues that the crux of the individualization in customized messages lies in the importance not so much of the self as receiver (because that is merely targeting—something that has been around for a long time in traditional media), but

of the self as sender or source. The ability to influence the nature and course of an online interaction, be it prepackaged content or ongoing dialogue with another entity, underlies the seductive appeal of customization and goes to the heart of imbuing agency in the end user.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The powerful psychological appeal of agency in online media is particularly important to consider in the context of children and adolescents' interactions with media. Studies with adults, even technical professionals, have shown that users can be extremely gullible about anthropomorphic cues. Even in the absence of such cues, people are quite willing to attribute human-like traits to nonhuman interface features (Nass & Moon, 2000). Given this, children and adolescents are, if anything, more likely to succumb to this tendency. Media literacy campaigns would do well to educate this population about the pitfalls as well as the promise of interacting with online agents. Furthermore, designers of agents ought to factor in the greater vulnerability to persuasion of children and adolescents in their attempts to create satisfying, yet ethically unproblematic interactions online.

The rapid spread of customization is likely to give today's children and adolescents a much deeper sense of personal agency than any previous generation experienced. This has important implications for their assumptions about their right to choose in their offline lives, with implications for their cognitive and social development. Self-determination theorists Ryan and Deci (2000) have noted across dozens of studies that for intrinsic motivation to be evident, individuals need not only competence and self-efficacy but also a real sense of autonomy or at least an attribution of causality to themselves. A sense of agency can be a powerful motivator for action, be it immediate browsing behavior online, interactions with others, or other attempts at furthering one's learning.

—S. Shyam Sundar

See also Cognitive Skills, Computer Use and; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Media Literacy, Key Concepts in

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ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

Over the last decade, rapid advances in communication technology have contributed to a sustained body

of scholarship in computer-mediated communication (CMC). The bulk of research attention has focused on comparing CMC with face-to-face (FtF) communication. For example, research has compared how CMC differs from FtF in several fundamental ways and discussed the unique aspects of CMC that result in impression-formation effects and the principles that govern online relationship building, among other topics. This program of research has been complemented by systematic conceptual development, even as the Internet has nurtured the examination of online social interaction in a variety of venues such as chat rooms, newsgroups, message boards, email, and websites.

Early research suggested that CMC could not approximate the warmth and feel of interpersonal communication, mainly because of the lack of nonverbal cues in the online context. However, increasing sophistication of communication technology has led researchers to recognize the numerous benefits proffered by CMC, including some that can help to develop online relationships. For instance, the process of communication can be synchronous (in real time, as in chat rooms) or asynchronous (e.g., email). The communicator can also take advantage of several advantages offered by these new technologies, depending on his or her own personality characteristics. For example, the relative anonymity offered by online venues can help a shy person ease into a conversation without suffering from the pressures of having to create an immediate "impression," as might happen in an FtF scenario. Furthermore, online venues can increase psychological affinity by bringing together communities of users with common interests and values. In addition, online relationships are not constrained by space or time. Finally, interactive features of new communication technologies enhance the quality of interaction—communicators can make use of multimedia features such as audio and video to provide a multifaceted dimension to communication. Also, they can easily send and receive messages to (and from) a large number of people without substantial cerebral or financial expenditure.

It is beyond the scope of the current entry to detail the wide body of work that has examined various aspects of online relationships; however, some important findings necessitate mention (see Bargh & McKenna, 2004, for an excellent review). Some early findings implied that CMC lacked the richness of (nonverbal) cues necessary to sustain relationships. The landmark HomeNet project by Kraut and colleagues (1998) concluded that Internet use had severe negative consequences because it led to increased feelings of depression and loneliness and impaired existing relationships. However, a follow-up study by Kraut et al. (2002) concluded that the negative outcomes observed in the previous study were unfounded and that greater Internet use actually had psychological value. Experimental studies that have examined factors underlying relationship formation on the Internet between college students have shown that people who first met online expressed greater liking for their partners than people who met first FtF. Furthermore, these participants also tended to exhibit their "true" selves to a greater degree online (compared to FtF contexts). Other findings also suggest that people tend to lose their inhibitions in the online environment and are more likely to indulge in self-disclosure, which can aid formation and maintenance of relationships.

The use of new media and communication technologies for relationship formation appears to be especially trendy with young adults and college-age youth, as evident from the popularity of such online venues as MySpace and Facebook, as well as the rapid proliferation of blogs. In addition, reports from organizations such as the Pew Internet Center convey that many teenagers report using Instant Messaging (IM) services to form and sustain relationships, whereas traditional applications such as email are used for more formal purposes such as academic issues (at least among this segment). In addition to being synchronous and easy to use, IM programs also offer the benefit of including nonverbal cues like *emoticons* (or emotional icons) to help create the richness of interpersonal communication. However, although it appears that new technologies have contributed to the robustness of online relationships, several warning signs deserve scrutiny. For example, there is growing concern that many young users are divulging an inordinate amount of personal information and are rather injudicious in terms of exercising caution. According to several recent reports, sexual predators have taken advantage of adolescents they have met online. Thus, while technology will continue to enhance the quality of online relationships, it is also incumbent on society to adopt safeguards to protect this vulnerable segment of the population.

—Sriram Kalyanaraman

See also Chat Rooms; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use, Socialization and; Email Pen Pals; Instant Messaging; Internet Relay Chat (IRC); Internet Use, HomeNet Study and; Internet Use, Psychological Effects of; Internet Use, Social; Personal Web Pages

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PARASOCIAL INTERACTION

Donald Horton and R. Richard Wohl coined the term *parasocial interaction* in 1956 to describe the imaginary interactions between the audience and TV variety show hosts, noting the "seeming face-to-face relationship" that viewers developed with these personalities. Children and adolescents, like adults, develop strong parasocial relationships with a wide range of individuals whom they encounter only through the media, such as musicians, actors, and fictional characters. Parasocial relationships, or pseudo-friendships with media figures, are distinct from identification, which is defined as sharing or internalizing media characters' experiences.

Scholars suggest that parasocial relationships may reflect an innate motivation to form attachments to others, and they have likened the development of parasocial relationships to the process by which people form interpersonal relationships. Studies suggest that initial attraction to media figures motivates further efforts to "get to know" them, leading to increased confidence in predicting and understanding their behaviors, greater intimacy or parasocial attachment, and an increased sense of relationship importance. Parasocial bonds are deeply felt and have many of the characteristics of "real" relationships. Audience members mourn the deaths of celebrities whom they knew only through the media (e.g., Diana, Princess of Wales) and experience real emotional distress when fictional characters die or become unavailable due to the ending of a television series. Many teens, for example, were distraught when the cult series *My So-Called Life* was canceled, due to their parasocial attachment to the lead character.

Only a limited amount of research has examined parasocial interaction among youth. An early study showed that children who felt as though they knew TV characters were more likely to worry about the characters and to feel as though the characters had communicated with them during the show. Children form stronger attachments to same-sex characters, but this pattern seems to change in adolescence, when teens are more inclined to form romantic parasocial attachments. In general, girls tend to develop stronger parasocial attachments than do boys. Parasocial relationships provide a sense of companionship and pseudo-friendship, but there is mixed evidence (nearly all with adults) regarding whether they compensate for a lack of social connections. Parasocial relationships enable young people to participate vicariously in relationships, through imaginary interactions, as preparation for real-life social roles. Some evidence also suggests that parasocial relationships may make young people more willing to rely on media characters and celebrities for personally relevant information and guidance.

—Cynthia A. Hoffner

See also Media Celebrities

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PARENTAL ADVISORY LABELS AND RATING SYSTEMS

By the early 2000s, most electronic media had devised and implemented a content advisory system designed to let adults know about objectionable content. Ratings systems are designed to allow parents to choose media content for their children without prescreening it. Each industry developed a collection of labels denoting differing levels of age-appropriate content. Those labels are usually referred to as a *rating.* In addition to these ratings, many media have developed an additional set of *content descriptors,* symbols that denote specific types of objectionable content (e.g., violent or sexual content, substance use).

Although rating systems help media build goodwill with audiences, media industries have rarely offered ratings spontaneously. Throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, each medium has heard public outcries about its indecent content. Threats of government regulation or legal action have usually preceded the development of rating systems. The First Amendment's free speech concerns offer protection to content producers, thus preventing government-mandated ratings. Still, most industries have introduced ratings to forestall battles with the U.S. Congress, media advertisers, and political action groups.

At present, each medium uses a different rating system, although the various systems have similarities. The motion picture and television industries use a rating system that distinguishes content suitable for all audiences from content for which parental guidance is suggested and content that is inappropriate for children. The movie rating system often includes brief phrases that describe the type of objectionable content. Television networks include a system of content descriptors that denote the type of objectionable content (e.g., *V* for violence). The recorded music industry uses a single sticker that warns parents about "explicit content," with no age-based ratings. No content descriptors are included on the sticker, so parents must investigate the recording to determine exactly what type of content is potentially objectionable.

Perhaps the most elaborate rating system is used by the video game industry's Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). This is an age-based system, identifying games that are appropriate for all players, young children, children older than 10 years old, teens, mature players, or adults only. These ratings are featured in game advertisements, such as the tag line "rated E for everyone" in a television ad for a video game. The ESRB's content descriptors, however, distinguish this rating system from others. One or more of 32 separate phrases can appear next to a game's rating to identify the type of content included (e.g., "strong sexual content," "blood and gore").

Several systems exist for rating Internet content, most of which are built into the website's computer code. One common system has been implemented by the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA). These systems include ratings about the level of violent, sexual, or other mature content. These codes are then read by the filter settings that come with most Web browsers (such as Internet Explorer) or filtering software packages (such as Net Nanny or Cyber Patrol). Adults can set these filters to allow varying levels of violent, sexual, or other content to be downloaded. Different settings can be saved for each computer user, so parents can use stricter filters for child Web surfers. Web pages or sites that do not meet these filter settings are then blocked from view.

An important proviso when considering any rating system is to know who rates the content in question. Only the film industry has an independent rating board that screens all content released and distributed by companies that belong to the Motion Picture Association of America (MMPA). MPAA rating

boards review thousands of movies; by comparison, thousands of *hours* of content must be reviewed for television, recorded music, and Internet media. As a result, ratings for the latter industries are assigned by content producers (e.g., the studio that made the television show or the record company) using industry-established guidelines. In addition, many private foundations and advocacy groups have taken it upon themselves to create and market rating systems that reflect their particular concerns (e.g., a religious group's ratings of how much a particular program upholds its religious and moral beliefs). These alternative rating systems are sometimes distributed for free or are offered as subscription-based information services on the Internet.

To date, criticisms of parental advisory labels and rating systems have been grouped into three principal groups. First are those that call for each industry to make ratings more prominent in advertisements for media content. One such report, issued by the Federal Trade Commission, was critical of the small type size or low volume for announcements of ratings for advertised movies, video games, and recorded music. Second, many organizations such as the Kaiser Family Foundation have called on content producers to develop and implement a universal rating system that could be applied to all media (thus eliminating any potential confusion between the various symbol systems currently used). These calls include pleas for a universal set of informative content descriptors. Third, some organizations such as the National Institute for Media and the Family have questioned the accuracy of media rating systems. The National Institute established its own parent panels to rate movies and television shows and found that in many cases, its panel's rating differed widely from the one assigned by the media outlet or industry rating panel.

—Ron Warren

See also Movies, Rating Systems and; Rating Systems, Parental Use of; Regulation (various entries)

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PARENTAL REGULATION OF CHILDREN'S MEDIA

Over the years, parents have been held increasingly responsible for helping their children to become critical media consumers. Parents most commonly do this by regulating their children's media use. For example, they may set rules for media use or actively mediate it.

SETTING RULES FOR MEDIA USE

Formulating rules is an example of a direct way in which parents can regulate children's media use. For example, when it comes to television viewing, four approaches to family rules can be distinguished:

Rules with regard to media use and other activities. A number of activities (such as doing homework or having dinner) are considered to be more important than television viewing. This means that parents will try to separate these activities from television viewing.

Rules concerning the amount and scheduling of media use. Parents may limit the amount of time that children can watch television. Furthermore, they may have rules about *when* their children are allowed to watch television (e.g., only on Sundays). Similar rules can be imposed with regard to Internet use. When the family is connected to the Internet via a telephone modem, parents can calculate the cost for the time the family is connected to the Internet.

Rules about program content. Parents may have regulations (implicit as well as explicit) about which program content children are allowed to watch. For example, they may prohibit children from watching violent or sexual content. Again, similar rules may also be observed in the regulations parents make about Internet use. In that case, parents may try to prevent their children from viewing explicit content by using software such as content filters.

No rules. In some families, parents do not have any regulations about television viewing. This situation often indicates that television viewing rules are so well internalized that children and parents no longer regard them as rules.

MEDIATION OF MEDIA USE

Actively mediating media use involves parents talking about media content, for example, telling their children to what extent television content is a reflection of real life. Children's media use can also be indirectly regulated by parental media use, a process that is called modeling. This implies that parental media use serves as a model for children's media use. Children will then imitate parental behavior. For example, when children watch the same television programs as their parents, it is called positive modeling. Today, it is more common to talk about reverse modeling whereby children's media use influences parental media use.

RESEARCH ON PARENTAL REGULATION OF MEDIA

In recent research, the concept of parental regulation of media use has shifted to focus on the concept of parental guidance. The starting point for this approach was an investigation of how parents cope with the television use of their children—whether parents try to cope with it by implementing certain restrictions, or whether they guide their children's television use by openly talking about it. Bybee, Robinson, and Turow (1982) distinguished three ways to guide children's television viewing: restrictive guidance, evaluative guidance, and unfocused guidance. *Restrictive guidance* implies that parents control the amount of time that children watch television as well as the type of programs that they watch (e.g., "My mother forbids me to watch certain TV programs"). *Evaluative guidance* refers to parents explaining certain aspects of the content to their children (e.g., "My mother tells me when someone in a TV show is doing something bad or something good"). *Unfocused guidance* implies that parents watch television together with their children and talk about the content with their children.

Currently, however, families are confronted with radical changes in the structure of the media environment (such as digitalization, Internet, and multimedia technology), changes that pose new challenges to family life. Researchers wondered whether parental guidance would change in this multimedia environment, so they expanded the research about parental guidance from television viewing to other media use (e.g., parental guidance of computer use). From this broader perspective, restrictive guidance implies controlling the use of television, computers, books, and comics. Evaluative guidance implies explaining the content and meaning of television programs, computer games, books, and comics. Unfocused guidance means that parents watch television together with their children, play a computer game together with their children, and read books and comics together with their children.

Interesting findings from this type of research are that evaluative and unfocused guidance are aimed at commitment and a good communicative link between parents and children. As such, the impact such guidance has on family life will surpass its impact on media use. Evaluative and unfocused guidance can help in creating a positive and caring family environment. Furthermore, silent coviewing, normally perceived as negative, can be seen as positive, especially for young children, who get a sense of security from such coviewing. In addition, researchers found that the outcome of the different forms of guidance depends on the subsystem (father-son, father-daughter, mother-son, or mother-daughter) using it. Mothers' attempts to restrict the reading of books decreases the level of conflict between boys and their mother, while it increases the level of conflict between girls and their mother. Furthermore, when a mother restricts television viewing, it leads to an increase in conflict between brothers and sisters. When a father is doing the same thing, it leads to a decrease in conflict between brothers and sisters. In conclusion, it can be said that the way parents guide their children's media use may predict the level of conflict in the family.

—Veerle Van Rompaey

See also Displacement Effect; Family Communication Patterns Model; Internet Use, Social; Kaiser Family Foundation; Media Education, Family Involvement in; Media Effects, History of Research on; Parenting Styles; Peer Groups (various entries)

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PARENTING STYLES

Popular opinion holds that media’s effect on children is a matter of the quality of parenting. This mind-set blends two distinct concepts in the research on parenting. The first is *parenting practices*, which refers to specific situational behaviors designed to achieve child-rearing goals (e.g., punishing bad behavior or rewarding good behavior). *Parenting styles*, on the other hand, represent a more stable set of attitudes and beliefs that form the context of parenting practices. For example, a parent’s belief in nonviolent conflict resolution might mean rewarding a child for verbally expressing anger (rather than using fists).

Hence, parenting style is a critical but indirect influence on child development. The concept rests on two dimensions: how responsive parents are to children’s needs and desires and how demanding parents are of children’s obedience. Diana Baumrind developed a typology of parenting styles. The first type is called *authoritative parenting* and emphasizes responsiveness and demandingness. This style involves high levels of nurturance, parent-child involvement, sensitivity, reasoning, control, and encouragement of the child’s independence. Authoritative parenting practices include low to moderate levels of discipline, high levels of nurturing, and high expectations of children’s behaviors. *Authoritarian parents* emphasize obedience and are characterized by high levels of discipline, restrictiveness, rejection, and power assertion. These parents show low levels of nurturing behaviors toward children but moderate to high expectations for children’s behaviors. *Permissive parents,* the third type, are defined in opposition to authoritarian parents. Permissive parents demonstrate a great deal of warmth and acceptance toward children but low levels of parent-child involvement and discipline. A fourth category, *neglectful parents,* was added in the 1980s. These parents stress neither responsiveness nor demandingness and exhibit low levels of all parenting practices. The style is characterized by high indifference to children’s needs and behaviors.

Most research on parenting has tried to link these four styles to child development outcomes. Authoritative parents were most likely to have preschool children who show self-motivation, have prosocial peer interactions, persist with tasks longer, initiate new activities more frequently, and achieve more in school. Children of authoritarian parents, on the other hand, were more inhibited in their preschool participation, felt a stronger sense of external control, and were more aggressive and disruptive in their peer-play activities. Children of permissive parents were less self-reliant and less motivated to achieve than other children.

There are no studies linking parenting styles to children’s media use. However, a similar concept—*family communication patterns*—refers to the general tone of parent-child communication. Similar to studies of parenting style, this research identified two principal dimensions. The first, a communication orientation, refers to parental communication that emphasizes a mutual understanding of thoughts, feelings, and opinions. The second, a conformity orientation, stresses parental authority and a need to agree with each other than to express disagreeable thoughts. Parents who stress both a communication and conformity orientation roughly mirror those with an authoritative parenting style. Those who stress a conformity orientation roughly mirror authoritarian parents. Parents who stress neither a conformity nor communication orientation roughly mirror permissive parents. No family communication pattern has been defined that seems related to neglectful parenting styles.

Several studies have identified correlations between family communication patterns, media use, and media effects. Communication-oriented parents are more likely to critically discuss television content with their children. They are more likely to make both positive and negative statements about TV without dictating children’s thoughts and reactions to content. These parents are also more likely

to ask children questions about content, and their children are more likely to ask questions in return. Thus, these children are more likely to regard parent-child interaction about television as a discussion in which their thoughts are seriously considered. The result is that parents take an active role in shaping children's interpretation of media content. This is largely seen as beneficial as children develop their own interpretive strategies for media content.

Control-oriented children are more likely to watch their parents' preferred television shows (regardless of other factors). This illustrates the tendency for children of control-oriented parents to imitate the behaviors they see in authority figures. Some evidence exists that control-oriented children are more likely to view violent television. Mothers in these families use more commands, comments that direct children how to interpret content, and advice about television. This suggests a pattern of direct transfer between control-oriented parents and their children. Children who mirror their parents are more likely to meet the demandingness of a control-oriented family communication pattern and an authoritarian parenting style. Some research has indicated that this leads to more positive reinforcement and less critical reflection about media content.

These contrasts have implications for children's interpretation of violent content. Communication-oriented children were more likely to judge violence based on the violent character's motivation (e.g., a character punching someone who had just hit him first). Control-oriented children based their judgment on whether the act was punished or not (e.g., whether the violent character was taken to jail by police officers). When control-oriented children saw violence that was not punished, they were more likely to choose aggressive endings for stories presented after viewing violence. Furthermore, the discussion strategies used in communication-oriented homes were found to encourage perspective taking during violent programs (e.g., considering the violence from the victim's point of view). Perspective taking has been linked to more developed moral reasoning skills (e.g., empathy for victims of violence) in young children.

—Ron Warren

See also Adult Mediation Strategies; Family Communication Patterns Model; Media Effects, Family Interactions and; Parental Regulation of Children's Media

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PARENTS MUSIC RESOURCE CENTER (PMRC)

The Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) was founded in May 1985 to raise awareness among parents about the profane, violent, and sexually explicit lyrics of some popular music that reached a mass audience of children and adolescents in the United States. Although a voluntary record labeling system was implemented in the 1980s by the record industry in response to PMRC pressure, the center failed to produce self-restraint within the record industry in the long term. During the 1990s, violent and erotic imagery resurfaced in heavy metal and particularly gangsta rap music videos and texts.

The founders of the PMRC included Susan Baker (wife of then-Secretary of the Treasury James A. Baker, III), Tipper Gore (wife of then-Senator and later Vice President Al Gore, Jr.), Pam Hower, and Sally Nevius, along with other influential Washington women. Leaders presented themselves as mothers worried about the moral development of children in a popular cultural environment that was awash with violent and obscene references. The PMRC assumed that pop music's lyrics and symbols were among the factors contributing to a rise in social problems, such as the increased prevalence of rape, suicide, and pregnancies among adolescents. The center insisted that parents needed to be warned about the music their children bought in huge quantities and listened to for hours on end.

Although popular music had always contained more or less vivid descriptions of romance and love,

the PMRC was convinced that pop themes had become more profane and vulgar during the 1970s and early 1980s. The initiators acted on a commonsense notion that seeing and hearing explicit images or texts contributed to premarital sex, violence, alcohol and drug use, suicide, and satanism. Specifically, the genres of heavy metal and hip hop were singled out as proponents of lewd and vicious behavior and anti-Christian themes. The PMRC argued that children should be prevented from listening to what it called "porn rock" released by highly popular performers, for example, Prince's "Darling Nikki" from the *Purple Rain* album. Another concern was explicit imagery presented in such music videos as Van Halen's "Hot for Teacher," which depicts a female teacher doing a striptease for the boys in her class, and Motley Crue's "Looks That Kill," featuring scantly clad women captured and imprisoned in cages by men in leather garments.

With its close connections to the American political establishment, the PMRC was able to promote highly publicized Senate hearings starting on September 19, 1985. The PMRC urged the U.S. record industry to restrain use of explicit content and warn consumers with labels or printed lyrics visible on the outside packages of music products. Beach Boy Mike Love backed the PMRC, but Dee Snyder (Twisted Sister), Jello Biafra (Dead Kennedys), John Denver, and Frank Zappa, testifying on behalf of the musicians' community, criticized the proposal. They framed it as an infringement of the First Amendment of the U.S. constitution, securing the right of free speech, and feared that a system of labeling music would lead to censorship. Zappa went so far as to characterize it as "an ill-conceived piece of nonsense" that promised "to keep the courts busy for years dealing with the interpretational and enforcement problems inherent in the proposal's design."

No legislation was proposed, but on November 1, 1985, after negotiations with the PMRC, the Record Industry Association of America (RIAA) announced that members would voluntarily promote a labeling system for albums with explicit content, declaring "Parental Advisory: Explicit Lyrics." Initially, the PMRC seemed successful in curbing music found threatening to young people's development; some chains, notably Wal-Mart, declined to stock albums with the "Tipper sticker." With their sales in danger, record companies were cautious and began to avoid labeling, leading to disappointment and critique from the PRMC. Some buyers may have been more reluctant to purchase labeled albums, but to fans of the PMRC's discredited artists, the stickers singled out exciting, forbidden music. Thus, the labels may have had an effect the PRMC never intended.

In the 1990s, the leverage of the center declined, and in 1993, its most prominent member, Tipper Gore, stepped back from her responsibilities as vice president. The parental advisory warning, standardized in 1990 and no longer a sticker but part of the album print itself, is still featured on album covers of music that the RIAA and its members consider "not for all ages."

—Tom ter Bogt and Stephen Soitos

See also Regulation, Music

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PEER GROUPS, FILE SHARING AMONG

Peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing networks are networks of computers that allow users to directly search for and download files (such as audio and video files) from other computers in the network. The popular but now defunct Napster was not a true P2P network because individual computers in the network searched a centralized server for music files and then downloaded those files from the computers that hosted them. Subsequent P2Psoftware, such as *Kazaa* and *LimeWire,* allows users to connect to one another directly, and there is no central entity routing transactions between computers.

When Napster was declared illegal in 2001, P2P file-sharing networks were developed because it was

initially hoped that, lacking a central server, they would be too amorphous to prosecute. P2P file sharing can be used to download software, music, music videos, and movies, and it is very popular among teenagers and college students. Concerns related to the use of P2P networks by youth include illegal downloading of copyrighted material, inadvertent exposure to pornography, and exposure to banner ads, adware, and other malicious programs.

ACCESSING COPYRIGHTED DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT

Because P2P networks allow users to exchange copyrighted material without paying for it, they have run afoul of the law. The Supreme Court ruled in June 2005 that operators of P2P networks are legally responsible for the copyright infringement on their networks. Most university campuses have banned P2P file sharing of copyrighted works. Although there is no systematic research on this topic, media and anecdotal reports suggest that children and adolescents continue to illegally download copyrighted material, especially music, on P2P networks such as *Kazaa* and *LimeWire*. One reason for youths' continued downloading of copyrighted material may be their lack of understanding of copyright law and the illegal nature of this activity. Even among those who know that downloading is illegal, many may be guided by the quintessentially adolescent view that "it can't happen to me" and continue to download, thinking that they will not be caught.

INADVERTENT EXPOSURE TO PORNOGRAPHY

Perhaps the biggest concern with regard to children and adolescents is their inadvertent access to pornography when searching for files on P2P networks. A report of the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) revealed that child and adult pornography could easily be found and downloaded from P2P networks. Of concern is their finding that such pornography is frequently retrieved when users search with innocuous keywords, such as cartoon characters or names of celebrities—keywords that are likely to be used by young children. Research indicates that pornography and related sexual media can influence sexual attitudes, moral values, and sexual activity of children and youth and can contribute to sexual violence. It is significant that the evidence indicates pornography has an adverse effect on older adolescent boys and young men already at high risk for aggressive behavior. Research suggests that exposure to influential sexual media up through the college years is overwhelmingly negative, although only a small proportion of participants recalled a physical response (e.g., sexual arousal) to such exposure. Females experience more negative memories (e.g., crying and sadness) than males, who more often reported arousal or interest. Extrapolating from these findings, we can infer that young people's memories of influential sexual media may result from inadvertent exposure on P2P networks and may be overwhelmingly negative, especially for girls, with some enduring effects and a relatively low rate of sexual response.

EXPOSURE TO BANNER ADVERTISEMENTS AND ADWARE

Finally, P2P networks contain banner ads that are often sexual in nature and that promote personal ads or products such as condoms. Furthermore, because the software used to access these networks can be downloaded for free, it is often bundled with adware, which can both slow down (e.g., through pop-ups) and threaten the security of the computer. Young users are not aware of this, and research suggests that children, in particular, may have to be taught to become critical consumers of online advertisements.

—Kaveri Subrahmanyam and Patricia Greenfield

See also Advertising, Deceptive Practices in; Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Federal Trade Commission; Internet Pornography, Effects of; Music Genres, History of; Regulation, Music

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PEER GROUPS, IMPACT OF MEDIA ON

How do the media contribute to young people's relations with their peers? This entry addresses this simple but important question, focusing on a general psychological process that can be observed across different media. Although much previous research and political debate have focused on the media's supposed negative influence on young people, recent research has started to document some of the more positive developmental outcomes of media involvement. This entry describes ways in which adolescents actively use the media to negotiate an important developmental process, namely the establishment of a positive social identity within a network of friends.

Several studies indicate that adolescence is a period when group behavior is very apparent, and friendship groups have long been seen as valuable networks through which processes of identity and self-esteem can be negotiated. Interest in the media has been identified as an important starting point for the formation of friendship groups. Indeed, research has suggested that having common interests in activities such as watching television and listening to music are regarded by adolescents as "defining" qualities of friendship. In a recent survey of British adolescents' reasons for listening to music, conducted by the University of Leicester Music Research Group, many adolescents reported listening to music to convey a particular impression of themselves to potential friends.

Recently, research has begun to draw explicitly on theories of group behavior to examine the developmental benefits of group membership during adolescence. One prominent approach in this respect is Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory. The theory starts from the assumption that everyone belongs to social groups, whether these be large-scale social categories such as gender or race to which individuals are ascribed automatically, or smaller-scale groupings such as friendship groups, membership of which is usually earned. Central to the theory is the idea that individuals seek to evaluate their social group memberships positively; that is, they strive for positive *social identity*. A wealth of research has demonstrated that the need for positive social identity underpins a broad range of group-based phenomena, not least intergroup discrimination.

Several studies have demonstrated that friendship groups are an important basis for the development of social identity during adolescence and that this process itself can have positive consequences for development in other domains. For example, Tarrant and his colleagues recently demonstrated that adolescents who feel a strong sense of attachment to or identification with a friendship group report less difficulty in negotiating various developmental tasks, such as accepting bodily changes and establishing close interpersonal relationships. Such adolescents also tend to report higher levels of self-esteem than those less strongly identified with a friendship group.

In determining the impact of the media on peer group relationships, research on social identity has generally adopted one of two approaches. First, some researchers have investigated the processes by which adolescents' engagement with media is managed so as to distinguish, or *differentiate*, between different friendship groups. Second, and more recently, researchers have investigated whether engagement with media might be used productively to *promote better relations* between different groups; in other words, studies in this area have considered whether media might be used to bring different social groups together. Below is a brief overview of these two lines of research.

MEDIA AND INTERGROUP DIFFERENTIATION

In one study, Tarrant and colleagues presented British adolescents with a set of 26 interests and activities, which included several media-based items (e.g., computer games, music, television, film). The participants were asked to do two things with this set: First, they rated each interest and activity in terms of how socially valued it was by other individuals their age; and second, they estimated the degree to which their own friendship group (the in-group) and another group (the out-group) was associated with each. The results showed that participants' group estimates were consistently biased in favor of their own group; thus, media and other activities that were positively valued were associated to a greater degree with the in-group than with the out-group. The opposite tendency was observed for negatively valued media; these were associated to a greater degree with the out-group. Of particular interest in this study was the finding that this bias was positively correlated with social identification. That is, those participants who perceived the

greatest difference between the two groups' orientation to the various interests and activities subsequently reported a stronger sense of attachment to their own group of friends.

These findings were interpreted by the researchers in terms of Kelley's seminal work on person perception. Kelley had previously demonstrated how individuals rely on trait information in forming judgments of others and demonstrated that personality traits can act as central descriptors by offering defining information about the likely characteristics of a person. Consistent with that research, it was argued that certain interests are valued more positively than others because they similarly convey central trait-like information. Thus, the affiliation of their own friendship group with positively valued media can be seen as one way in which the adolescents could convey a positive impression of that group, while at the same time distinguishing that group from other groups.

MEDIA AND INTERGROUP HARMONY

Although the second line of research has so far capitalized only on adolescents' strong interest in musical media, it seems likely that the underlying psychological processes will also be reflected in other media forms with which adolescents are engaged. A study by Bakagiannis and Tarrant presented a sample of British adolescents with differing information about their own group's and another group's musical interests. In one of the study's conditions, participants were informed that members of the two groups had highly similar interests. Compared to a control group whose members were told nothing about each group's musical interests, those participants who believed the two groups had similar interests displayed lower levels of intergroup discrimination when asked to describe their attitudes toward the two groups. In other words, the study showed that encouraging adolescents to believe their own social group and another group had a common media interest led to the formation of more favorable attitudes toward that group.

In addition to the obvious theoretical relevance of research on how different forms of media can promote positive relationships between social groups, such work has a clear practical application by contributing to broader social and political discussions concerning how intergroup harmony can be fostered in an increasingly multicultural society. The continued adoption of the social identity perspective in such initiatives will likely make an important contribution to our understanding of the underlying psychological processes.

—Mark Tarrant

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Peer Groups, Influences on Media Use of

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PEER GROUPS, INFLUENCES ON MEDIA USE OF

Adolescents spend a significant portion of their time using media, commonly for purposes of entertainment, identity formation, experiencing high sensation, coping, and youth culture identification. Information about how peers influence such media use comes from self-reports gathered from surveys and questionnaires or from studies using qualitative methods. Experimental studies are not represented in the literature. Thus, based on data in most studies, it is unclear whether peers influence media preferences, media preferences dictate the choice of peers, or the effect is reciprocal. Longitudinal studies are more helpful in addressing this question, but relatively few have been conducted. Nevertheless, the literature can help us understand the relationship between peers and media choices by examining media

use over the developmental course and by identifying the social context of media use.

MEDIA USE OVER THE DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE

In about the seventh or eighth grade, when children enter their teens, their media habits change markedly. Television use drops substantially and is replaced with music listening, almost exclusively to popular music as opposed to classical. This trend continues until late adolescence, when music use equals TV exposure. At the same time, children undergo a transition in which the peer group grows in importance as a source of socialization, and the family diminishes. Several studies have documented that adolescents with stronger peer orientations tend to listen to more music, whereas more family-oriented adolescents watch more television. During summer holidays, when adolescents have fewer opportunities to interact with peers, television preferences tend to regress to content favored during childhood. Indeed, TV viewing is correlated with time spent with family; however, music listening is associated with time spent with peers and friends.

As children develop, the role of peers changes in media use decisions, as demonstrated in studies of motives for video game playing. For children in the eighth grade (13 to 14 years old) and, to a lesser extent, for college students, the opportunity to interact with friends predicts use of video games. However, social interaction does not predict video game use among children in fifth grade (10 to 11 years old). For fifth graders, competition and the desire to be strong are significant predictors of video game use.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF MEDIA USE

Opportunities for peer interaction, or the lack thereof, are associated with preferences for different media among adolescents. In one study, television use was higher for high school seniors (about 18 to 20 years old) who reported never going on dates or who reported rarely or never going out in the evening for fun compared to those who had more frequent social contact with peers. Another study found that loneliness and shyness predicted frequency of television use among adolescent boys (10 to 17 years old). The same researchers observed that the number of friends predicted time spent watching TV alone. Contact with same-sex peers is especially important, and youth who lack such interaction may use media to alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation.

The nature of the peer group itself also influences media choices. Several longitudinal studies by Keith Roe have documented media preferences of different peer groups among European samples. In one study, he found that low school achievement at age 13 was related to stronger orientation toward peers. This orientation toward peers was related to preferences for rock and punk music 2 years later. However, as academic achievement increased, so did preference for classical music. These relationships emerged even after controlling for socioeconomic status. Similar findings surfaced in Roe's study of VCR use. Based on these results, Roe argued that educational institutions function to polarize students, leading to the formation of pro- or anti-school attitudes. These attitudes spawn different subcultures, which are the basis for many media preferences. Other longitudinal research by Roe found that a preference for socially disvalued media was related to membership in subcultures that were experiencing downward social mobility. Indeed, adolescents who prefer heavy metal music tend to have doubts about their abilities to succeed academically and to have problems with family, whereas teens who prefer light music tend to be overly responsible, rule conscious, and conforming. However, at least one study found that a preference for heavy metal music was not associated with delinquency among peers.

Different peer groups are associated with the use of different media content. For example, one 1973 study found that adolescents 16 to 18 years old were more likely to see sexually explicit material in the presence of mixed company or same-sex peers than when they were alone with members of the opposite sex. For males and females, the more popular they were (i.e., the more close friends they had) and the more frequently they dated, the more likely they were to have seen sexually explicit material. Other studies have reported that VCR use often occurs among same-sex peers and often involves viewing socially devalued media. For example, Swedish adolescents' (15 to 16 years old) use of the VCR occurred overwhelmingly in the presence of a small group of friends and for underachieving, anti-school Swedish youth, VCR use was likely to include content such as pornography, violence, and horror. Other research has

noted that movie viewing among adolescents is most likely to occur in the presence of friends or siblings rather than parents.

Social settings also impact the enjoyment of different media. In studies of music listening, researchers have generally found that adolescents experience the greatest positive emotion when listening in the presence of friends and less positive feelings when listening alone or with parents.

Identity formation is an important part of adolescent media use, and teens may watch media content that they do not necessarily enjoy in order to gain acceptance. For instance, Roe reports that in mixed company, female adolescents often acquiesced to male preferences for violence or action when renting videos, although males were less likely to comply with female preferences for sad or romantic films. Among male peers, violent or sexually explicit material was used as a test of male toughness, even though participants in the study reported dislike of such content. Furthermore, behavior of peers may impact the enjoyment of some content. In one study, experimenters coached confederates to either conform or act counter to gender stereotypical behavior during a horror film. Males reported greater enjoyment of the film when a female companion acted squeamish uring scenes of horror, but less when she was unresponsive to the violent content. Similarly, females reported less fear of the film when a male companion displayed toughness rather than weakness.

—John Davies

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Music, Group Identity and; Music Listening, Uses of; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Television, Motivations for Viewing of; Uses and Gratifications Theory

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PEER GROUPS, JOINT USE OF MEDIA IN

Children and adolescents prefer using media together with friends and their peer group. Habits of media use within a peer group differ depending on the media type (e.g., print versus electronic media) and are also related to age and gender. Media use also varies from one country to another. Some forms of media are more compatible with social activity than others, and some media types can serve as status symbols.

PEER GROUPS

Peer groups are characterized by common leisure interests, ethical values, and preferences concerning important in-group matters such as lifestyle and music. They often consist of young friends of both genders, and in most cases, they develop in school contexts. Peers are especially important for adolescents.

Being part of a peer group represents an important developmental step, so most adolescents belong to one. Within them, social skills are fostered because corporate guidelines have to be negotiated, cooperation and mutuality are practiced, and opinions and attitudes are constructed.

The self-classification to a group of people initiates a process of social comparison, where differences between members of the group members are emphasized, sharpening the individual's perception of his or her own attributes. Allocation to peer groups takes place in a socially, developmentally, and educationally selective way. Thus, the members of a peer group play an important and active role within a child or adolescent's development.

Although peer groups do not actually change their members' habits, the organization of leisure time is markedly affected. In this way, peer group members mutually influence preferences for using media types and subtypes. Social influence concerning attitudes toward special media types is itself an important feature of a peer group. The resultant valuations can be an auxiliary means to distinguish from out-group

members or from parents. However, the influence of peer group members cannot totally eliminate media use patterns previously acquired in one's family of origin.

PRINT MEDIA

Unlike the use of most electronic media, reading books or journals is not normally a shared peer group activity. Even within a circle of good friends, reading together is uncommon. Peer groups play the role of rather informal agencies that indirectly foster literacy development. There is a significant relationship between the reading activities of the members of a peer group. The strength of this relationship increases with age and reaches its peak in adolescence. Reading-related communication within peer groups is also strongly associated with spending more time reading. Adolescents are highly influenced by their peers' choice of literature—the right choice of text can be a way of joining a peer group. Voluntary reading quantity is frequently affected by peers, so peer group interaction has an indirect influence on reading fluency and text comprehension. Text comprehension can be also enhanced by reading-related communication with the members of a group.

Children and adolescents who are affiliated with aggressive and school-dissociated peer groups show lower reading achievement. Students who self-select a school-dissociated peer group often experience reading habits as a differentiating feature between their own in- and the other's out-group. In this way, peer groups partially determine the development of the individual's reading-related self-concept.

Heavy readers tend to make friends in a peer group of heavy readers. Furthermore, having close friendships or partnerships with people who usually read a lot is a strong motivation to increase reading and to talk about literature.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Children and adolescents like playing electronic games, some of which are programmed to allow contests with others. These electronic games are used more often as a joint activity than TV watching, and a greater percentage of boys than girls say that they usually play such games with their friends. Boys who play electronic games frequently show a tendency toward a behavior type that can be described as ambitious skill-improving.

A completely different peer-group activity is the online relationship. This notable phenomenon is related to some user characteristics that should be mentioned here: As predictors of *close* online relationships, adolescent difficulties show just as much predictive power as alienation from parents. However, users of chat rooms and multi-user dungeons often make friendships that are in many ways similar to face-to-face relationships.

Although the Internet can be used to foster one's connection with the social world, high Internet use is associated with high emotional loneliness. One reason for this may be that high Internet use can take the place of face-to-face relationships. Girls in particular prefer communicative computer use such as email or chat rooms.

TV is a domestic medium, but peer coviewing and discussion of things such as anti-social television occurs more often than parental coviewing. The most popular programs are often watched in the company of friends. Especially 13-to-14-year-old children prefer watching TV together with friends because adolescents often watch television as a means of connecting to a peer group. Talking about TV-related questions is a popular leisure activity, and the percentage of children and adolescents who talk about television increases with age. Watching and discussing content frequently can lead to generally positive attitudes toward the mediated content.

Watching a video is mainly practiced in a peer group context, too. However, talking about videos occurs less than talking about TV programs; probably because peers have simultaneously talked while watching it.

—Armin Castello

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media

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PERSONAL WEB PAGES

A recent Pew Internet & American Life Project study suggests that a substantial percentage of American youth create, or have created, online content. For example, the study found that almost two thirds of online youths between the ages of 12 and 17 have exhibited a semblance of technological savvy by creating such content as personal web pages that feature graphics, multimedia, and narratives (see Lenhart & Madden, 2005, for specific details). This is hardly surprising, considering that the Internet and the Web have permeated modern society, and concomitant technological advancements offer users several means through which they can easily create and disseminate information in the online world.

In addition to ease of creation, one major factor underlying the ubiquity of personal websites is the social currency that they deliver to the creator of such content. Personal web pages represent individualistic expression and render possible the accentuation of the self in easily distributable modes. Two points are especially noteworthy: the necessity of self-expression and the ability to express unique attributes of the self to a broad audience without encumbrance. As cultural psychologists have long argued, individuals have always had the innate desire to express their individualism in many ways. For instance, an inspection of a teenager's bedroom offers insights into the person's identity and the core values and beliefs espousing the individual's personality. The ability to express the self is evident in numerous venues—from cars to apparel. Thus, while personal web pages as a medium of self-expression are hardly innovative, several inherent characteristics of the Web make them somewhat unique. First, the capability to market the self to a large audience is enhanced exponentially (because any user with online access can potentially locate a particular page). Second, time, space, and geographic factors are removed, thereby facilitating self-expression. Third, individuals need not be restricted by financial constraints, as the cost of creating and maintaining a personal website is minimal. Fourth, the actual information that an individual wants to disseminate or express can be transmitted in several modes, or modalities (e.g., in addition to text, individuals can use other modes such as audio, video, graphics, or a combination of these modes). Finally, the unique technology of the Web can assist users with making their websites interactive (using such tools as chat rooms, feedback forums, message boards, etc.) and easily navigable (using creative hyperlinking strategies).

However, although the popular notion suggests that creators of personal websites manifest their personal identities in cyberspace, relatively little research attention has been paid to exploring personality perceptions of website creators. One innovative study by Vazire and Gosling (2004) applied frameworks from the interpersonal perceptions literature to examine whether personal websites result in impression formation effects. Vazire and Gosling imply that personal websites are an accurate reflection of identity claims—declarations that proclaim an individual's unique persona and convey how he or she would like to be viewed. Furthermore, they empirically demonstrate that information contained in personal websites are accurate reflections of individuals' "true" selves and hence result in observers evaluating (creators') personalities based on their websites. These findings provide research evidence supporting popular anecdotal claims that many individuals, especially adolescents and college-age youth, regard personal websites as an important means of social interaction.

Another recent ethnographic study jointly conducted by Yahoo!, OMD, and Teenage Research Unlimited (TRU) examined the influence of new media and communication technology on teenagers from several countries and found that teens embrace certain core values, namely, community, self-expression, and personalization (see Sass, 2005). That is, personalization or customization allows Web users to tailor their online content according to specific desires or likes and hence allow expression of their true selves. Furthermore, customization can also render a sense of belonging in Web users. The promise of customization has been touted by scholars in several disciplines, but one recent experimental study of college students offers convincing

evidence that customization has enormous psychological value. Kalyanaraman and Sundar (2006) showed that college-age users exhibit a marked preference for personalized features and information because customization can enhance perceptions of relevance, involvement, interactivity, and novelty.

Of course, any current discussion of online content creation would be remiss without an acknowledgment of the growing importance of Web logs, or blogs. Essentially, blogs are online diaries, and they appear to be hugely popular with young adults. For example, about 40% of young adults with online access have created blogs. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project report, blogs appear to be especially popular with young girls in the 15 to 17 age range, as a quarter of this segment with online access maintain their own blogs, compared to about 15% of boys in the same age range. Consistent with earlier discussions, Pew researchers found that young adults largely use blogs as a networking tool.

In conclusion, even as a growing number of young adults are becoming sophisticated in their use of new media, the continuing popularity of venues such as personal web pages will be contingent on the speed of technological advancement. For a generation that is accustomed to a large number of basic human needs being fulfilled through digital means, further innovations in interactive and customized technologies may be paramount in an even greater number of online users creating—and maintaining—Web-based content. However, technological progress may also be juxtaposed with online naiveté, as several scholars and policymakers have voiced concern that an increasing number of adolescents appear to be unaware of the potential detriments of revealing too much personal information on the Web.

—Sriram Kalyanaraman

See also Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use, Socialization and; Human-Computer Interaction (HCI); Interactive Media; Inter-activity; Internet Use, Psychological Effects of; Internet Use, Social; Online Media, Agency and; Online Relationships; Websites, Children's

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PHYSIOLOGICAL AROUSAL

Media effects researchers have studied physiological arousal in order to understand both the emotional and cognitive effects of media. Although they have focused on activation of the sympathetic nervous system, they have examined both cortical and autonomic arousal. Research on physiological arousal has been used to study the effects of both content and noncontent elements of media. Recently, the construct of physiological arousal has been extended to new media environments in which researchers attempted to examine the excitatory potential of computer animation, the speed of image downloading, and video games. Physiological arousal has also been an important indicator of such emotional media experiences as "sense of being there" or "presence."

Like many aspects of mediated communication, the construct of arousal has been difficult to define. The complexity of its meaning has resulted in a broad range of theoretical and operational definitions. Most media effects researchers have tended to treat the concept of arousal mainly in physiological terms. This has probably been due to the basic tenet of psychophysiology that the system responsible for governing many of our psychological experiences will manifest itself in signals that can be recorded by physiological measurement. When applied to the context of mediated communication, this principle has led many researchers to believe that changes in an individual's affective state or covert behavior displayed during exposure to a media stimulus will be followed by corresponding changes in physiological activity. Although this conception of one-to-one relationship has generally been thought to oversimplify the relationship between individuals'

psychological states and their proposed physiological manifestations, its promise has led many media effects researchers to adopt it as a logical alternative to verbal self-reports and behavioral measures.

CORTICAL AROUSAL

When defined physiologically, arousal generally means a heightened state of activation or excitement of both cortical and autonomic processes. Cortical arousal is a typical indicator of attention. It occurs when the reticular activating system (RAS) stimulates various regions of the cerebral cortex, and it is usually measured by recording the variations over time in the electrical potentials observed on the surface of the scalp. Early pioneers of cortical arousal focused on its impact on performance or behavioral intensity. Although activation in the RAS is believed to be the primary mechanism governing cortical arousal and thus provides a condition from which to infer the direction and intensity of a moment-to-moment shift in attention, activities of autonomic activation are also used for a similar purpose. For example, a sudden deceleration in cardiac reaction during exposure to a sensory stimulus is believed to indicate short-term attention, whereas a gradual increase in response to an ideational stimulus is associated with long-term attention to the stimulus.

AUTONOMIC ACTIVATION

Although cortical arousal has often been used to examine the attention-getting potential of certain visual elements of television messages, such as scene changes and movement, most media effects researchers have used autonomic activation as the primary physiological mechanism for arousal. Although there seems to be a minor disagreement over what physiological activities should be monitored for a proper measure of arousal, researchers of this kind primarily focus on activities in the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Commonly monitored autonomic indices of arousal include heart rate, blood pressure, pupil dilation, and skin conductance response, also known as *electrodermal activity.* Increases in these indices generally indicate a high level of arousal.

This emphasis on autonomic activities as primary measures of physiological arousal stems from Walter B. Cannon's (1927) general conceptualization of arousal as a system of energy mobilization. According to Cannon, physiological arousal is presumed to elicit a signal directing the organism to mobilize resources so that an appropriate action can be made in the presence of a stimulus carrying significant information. The ultimate goal of this adaptive system is to approach stimuli that are appealing while avoiding threatening stimuli. So arousal and its physiological manifestation are viewed mainly as a part of the organism's defense mechanism. Cannon also suggested that various forms of physiological responses of arousal all originate in the sympathetic division of the ANS, which is the key to our emotional experiences. This notion of a unitary arousal system has resulted in the classic formulation of arousal as "undifferentiated" or "unspecified" activation of the autonomic system. If this is the case, multiple indicants of arousal should show a high level of covariance with each other as they are proposed to vary only in intensity along a single continuum ranging from deep sleep to high excitement. The cognitive appraisal of bodily responses determines the affective state or emotion the individual is experiencing.

One problem associated with this single-system explanation for arousal is the lack of association between different physiological measures that are assumed to behave in a similar pattern. This lack of correlation raises questions about the legitimacy of their uniform application to different contexts. The parasympathetic branch of the ANS is generally responsible for calming or reducing arousal, which typically occurs under the condition of a significant environmental change following either an expected or unexpected event. This phenomenon has allowed many attention researchers to use the direction of cardiac reaction, rather than other autonomic measures, as an important physiological indicator to distinguish between different mental states driven by different psychological events. In fact, Lacey observed this phenomenon years earlier and proposed what is commonly known as *directional fractionation*; it suggests a multidimensional, modular-specific function of the autonomic system. More recently, several researchers have proposed an alternative view that both systems may work in three different modes—simultaneously (coupled), independently (uncoupled), and mutually exclusive (reciprocal).

RESEARCH ON EFFECTS OF CONTENT ELEMENTS

In several studies, physiological arousal has been monitored as one of the primary outcome (i.e., effect)

variables for both emotional and cognitive responses to media messages. The purpose was to isolate those message elements that were known to generate certain psychological effects. For example, violence is one of the most popular contents of television entertainment, and its emotional impact can be measured by indexing a viewer's physiological activities (e.g., heart rate or skin conductance response) as they unfold during the exposure. In a similar way, a researcher can examine the emotional impact of frightening movies or suspenseful television programs on children. In these examples, physiological data not only provide the researcher with valuable information about the potential effects of certain media contents, such as violence and suspense, but also help to determine the magnitude of the emotional reactions displayed by certain individuals. Early emotion researchers have focused on identifying emotion-laden media contents, such as violence, suspense, horror, and erotica. Depending on the content manipulated and the observed physiological characteristics, researchers use different qualifiers to label particular emotional states as *sexual arousal* or *fear arousal.*

RESEARCH ON EFFECTS OF NONCONTENT ELEMENTS

Recent arousal researchers have paid more attention to noncontent elements of media messages and their physiological correlates. Their general approach to investigating mediated communication is to define a media message as a constant stream of visual and auditory sensory stimuli. How these stimuli are registered, attended to, analyzed, and remembered in our brain determines the nature of our cognitive and emotional reactions to a message. In this line of research, various indices of physiological arousal are used as indicators of psychological parallels, such as attention and emotional arousal. Noncontent elements that have drawn a great deal of research interest because of their saliency and alleged impact on attention and arousal are motion, screen size, pacing, cuts, edits, negative videos, and so on. The general finding is that the presence of these so-called formal features, most noticeable in visual and auditory elements of media entertainment and information, capture our involuntary attention and produce strong emotional responses due to their status as novel, unpredictable, and significant stimuli. The system's increased sensitivity and the lower threshold to respond to these stimuli will be followed by markedly different activities in several measures of physiological arousal. Increases in these activities are interpreted as an urgent call for the system to mobilize available resources. The ultimate goal of this drive is to facilitate the processing of information at hand by maximizing the efficiency of resource allocation to different tasks.

THEORIES RELATING AROUSAL AND MEDIA EFFECTS

Besides its role in helping researchers delineate the parameters of effective media content and forms, the most significant contribution of physiological arousal to media research has been the development of some major theories tying the concept of arousal with various forms of media effects. In those theories, physiological arousal has been conceptualized as an important intervening variable that mediates a certain media effect. For example, researchers have developed two general ideas to explain the critical role physiological arousal plays in intensifying emotional responses to media violence and sexuality. According to the so-called enhancement hypothesis, a high level of physiological arousal induced during media exposure intensifies the overall impact of an emotional content. An important implication of this hypothesis is that when an individual is aroused either by exposure to emotional media content or to a form element (e.g., motion), he or she will respond to the situation more dramatically and intensively, particularly when the situation calls for action. In other words, the high level of physiological arousal will enhance the action tendency (e.g., aggressive behavior) of an individual in response to a media stimulus (e.g., television violence). A similar effect can be observed when an individual enjoys music more, particularly when the music is accompanied by a heightened state of arousal.

Probably the most sophisticated theoretical mechanism relating physiological arousal to the action tendencies of an individual or other enhancement effects of media stimuli is the excitation transfer theory proposed by Dolf Zillmann. This theory is based on three basic premises related to the nature of physiological arousal. First, physiological arousal is diffuse and value neutral, meaning that its nature must be determined by the individual who experiences it. Once physiologically aroused, the individual surveys the environment in an effort to search for the locus of its happening. A successful attribution will then allow the individual to label the physiological state as a subjective experience

of emotion that is consistent with the context. One ramification of this line of reasoning is that there is a possibility of misattribution or disassociation between the true cause and the subjective experience, and when this occurs, the individual can behave in accordance with the misattributed cause. Second, once elicited, physiological arousal decays gradually. This point is directly related to the premise that physiological arousal can be additive within the same individual, even when it occurs at different times. The residual arousal from a prior emotional experience can be transferred to a subsequent event so that the emotional reaction to the second event can be overly intensified. For example, an individual experiencing a high level of arousal after being exposed to a frightening movie may find a dramatic ending or a quick resolution amusing and enjoyable. This explains our paradoxical enjoyment of those media stimuli that contain the most horrific images or the greatest suspense when in fact aversion or anxiety seems to be the dominant emotional experience throughout the exposure.

The enhancing effect of physiological arousal can be most devastating when it occurs in the context of exposure to sexual material containing violent images. Increased arousal generated by the sexual material will be transferred to the violence, and viewers will react to the violence more aggressively than they would normally do. This happens when an individual misinterprets the extra level of arousal gained from the sexual material either as anger or hostility, which in turn leads to postexposure aggression.

—Nokon Heo

See also Arousal Theories; Excitation-Transfer Theory

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PORNOGRAPHY, CHILD

See CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

PORNOGRAPHY, INTERNET

Among the hottest and most challenging of all political topics facing legislatures, courts, librarians, parents, and teachers today is how to balance the rights of adults to view sexual material online with the need to protect children from viewing these same materials. There is very little dispute that the government has a compelling interest in protecting children from possible harms caused by consuming Internet pornography. However, there is quite a bit of disagreement on what is the best way to accomplish that goal. Congress has tried twice to pass laws to curtail the availability of pornography to minors, but both laws have failed to pass constitutional muster. However, proponents of Internet filtering software won a victory in 2003 in *United States v. American Library Association.* The

Children's Internet Protection Act, or CIPA, mandates that libraries that receive federal funding for Internet access must install filters on their Internet-accessible computers; this act was found constitutional.

EXPOSURE TO AND USAGE OF ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY

Studies vary in their estimates of the exposure of children and adolescents to online pornography. According to a 2005 study released by Third Way, which bills itself as "a strategy center for progressives," not only is the largest group of consumers of online pornography youth 12 to 17 years of age, but the pornography industry itself estimates that 20% to 30% of its traffic comes from those under 18. Similarly, a report from the Pew Research Center suggests that while more parents are installing filters intended to protect their children than ever before, and 62% of parents actually check where their children have been online, only 33% of children believe their parents are checking on them. However, Lo and Wei (2005) found that 38% of their sample of 2,001 Taiwanese teens had been exposed to online pornography. Boys reported more exposure than girls, and all reported using Internet pornography more than other traditional forms of pornography such as books and comics.

How does this exposure to online sexual materials affect children? Mitchell, Finkelhor, and Wolak (2003) report that most studies examining questions like this report that exposure to nonviolent pornography has a negligible effect, whereas violent pornography may result in increased aggression toward women. Most such studies are done on college students or adults, they note, and no studies target children under the age of 14. These authors examined the amount of unwanted exposure to pornography experienced by children and found that roughly one in four children who use the Internet encounter unwanted sexual materials. About 6% of children in the study reported feeling some kind of distress from the unwanted exposure—thereby suggesting, noted the authors, that children experience a short-term harm as well as the long-term psychological or moral harm usually discussed.

In their study of Taiwanese teenagers, Lo and Wei (2005) found that the teens' exposure to online sexual materials correlated to increased acceptance of and participation in sexual promiscuity. They further suggested that online pornography effects were stronger than those attributable to traditional pornography.

FILTERS AND OTHER MEANS OF RESTRICTING ACCESS

Filtering software is the broad term for software installed on the user's computer that blocks sites based on the presence of objectionable content. Such filters are usually based either on blacklists of offensive sites or "whitelists" of acceptable sites. Some filters are content-based, scanning websites for offensive words or for large numbers of flesh-colored images.

CIPA, while deemed constitutional, does not mandate installation of a particular filtering software package on library computers. There are many options for filtered Internet access. The most common is a client-side application (on the home or library computer, not on the Internet service provider's server) that filters access. These filtering packages include such titles as CyberPatrol, CYBERsitter, and Net Nanny. They offer features such as individual profiles, so parents can customize their children's access, editable filter lists, and blocks for chats and newsgroups. Filtering software compares the content on a requested page to its list of blocked sites and returns a response consistent with that list.

Critics of filters point to their still-clumsy protocols, which result in both over- and underblocking, as well as the proprietary lists of blocked sites that most filtering software companies maintain. Resnick, Hansen, and Richardson (2004) reported that filtering software is far from a silver bullet protecting children from all objectionable content. They called for additional research into the strengths and weaknesses of filters, claiming that many previous examinations of filter over- and underblocking were methodologically flawed. Proponents claim that filtering is the least restrictive means of achieving the goal of keeping pornographic content away from children.

Server-side filtering is an option for parents who are concerned about underblocking of sexual content. These services, such as MayBerry USA and CleanWeb, filter content before it reaches a user's computer. The filter cannot be disabled or evaded, as objectionable content never reaches the computer.

Rating systems such as PICS (Platform for Internet Content Selection) are voluntary systems undertaken by website owners to rate their materials. All online content, not just sexual content, can be rated using PICS, and filters could theoretically be crafted to block certain ratings of content. The PICS standard is not universal—in fact, it is not intended to be so—which is

both a strength and a weakness. Because it is not a government entity crafting the ratings, it is not censorship, but because anyone can craft a set of ratings, and such ratings are voluntary, it does not satisfy proponents of filtering.

In June 2005, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) announced that it was supporting a new .xxx top-level domain name intended to provide a separate section of the Internet for online sexual content. This announcement was met with consternation from international governments and the online pornography industry alike. Issues raised range from the ghettoization of sexual materials, to the belief that the pornography industry will not voluntarily move to such a domain, to the creation of a virtual "red light" district. As yet, the controversy remains unresolved.

It should be noted that parental authority in the management of Internet access for their minor children has never been challenged. The Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996 is intended to restrict the purveyors of online sexual content, and CIPA applies only to libraries.

—Genelle Belmas

See also First Amendment; Regulation (various entries)

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PORNOGRAPHY, MAGAZINES

Although written and pictorial depictions of sexually explicit behavior date back at least as far as recorded history, the roots of contemporary pornographic magazines can be found in the 1950s. Scholars have examined numerous dimensions of the content of pornographic magazines and have also studied the effects of exposure to and consumption of such publications. According to some surveys, nearly all adolescent males and the majority of females older than 16 years of age have seen some form of pornographic magazine content, and younger teens are also frequently exposed to such materials.

HISTORY OF PORNOGRAPHIC MAGAZINES

Numerous historians have noted that drawings of people engaged in hetero- and homosexual behavior adorned cave walls, statues, Grecian urns, and a multitude of ancient artwork. Short tomes of a sexual nature became increasingly common in the 18th century. For example, historians have noted that erotic stories were widely circulated among Civil War soldiers in the 1860s, as were early nude photographs of

women. In short, as the means to produce media developed, content of a sexual nature soon followed.

Magazines depicting all manner of sexual behavior were available prior to the mid-20th century, although not on a mass market scale. Instead, small-scale publications were typically distributed "under the counter," from traveling salesmen out of the trunks of cars, or via equally clandestine means. Many observers credit the success of *Playboy* magazine with legitimizing so-called gentlemen's magazines when it began publication in 1953. Relaxed social mores and legal restrictions resulted in a burgeoning of more sexually explicit magazines beginning in the late 1960s. Magazines such as *Penthouse* and *Hustler* soon began publication and featured increasingly graphic depictions of nude females.

Sexually explicit magazines enjoyed continued success through the next two decades, with some of the largest magazines reporting peak circulation figures in the millions. However, most reported significant declines in circulation in the late 1990s due to the growth of freely available Internet pornography. Some magazines responded by continuing to increase the sexual explicitness of their photographs, as well as by focusing on various *paraphilias* (nontraditional sexual activities). A number of publishers, including the publisher of *Penthouse*, were forced to file bankruptcy to cope with declining sales. Nonetheless, other mainstays of the adult magazine industry, such as *Playboy*, were more successful in translating their success in print to the online environment.

CONTENT OF PORNOGRAPHIC MAGAZINES

By definition, contemporary pornographic magazines contain pictorial depictions of sexual content representing varying degrees of explicitness. However, examination of most of these magazines reveals an abundance of content in addition to these pictorials, such as cartoons, fiction of an erotic and nonerotic nature, viewer comments, and articles addressing an array of topics. This format is hardly coincidence: It helps provide constitutional protection under current obscenity laws.

Some surveys of pornographic magazines have identified thousands of unique titles available in major metropolitan cities in the United States. Despite the abundance of these magazines (or perhaps because of it), social scientists have failed to conduct systematic, comprehensive, baseline assessments of the content of sexually explicit magazines. Nonetheless, some general conclusions may be drawn. Studies have demonstrated that the majority of sexually explicit magazines are intended for heterosexual male consumption. The majority of sexual content consists of photographs of nude females alone or of two or more people engaged in heterosexual activities such as oral sex and intercourse. Nonetheless, pornographic magazines catering to a variety of sexual interests, fetishes, and orientations are common.

One scholar examined factors suggesting that some adult-oriented magazines, such as *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, were directed toward upper-class readers, whereas others were aimed at a working-class audience, including magazines such as *Cheri*, *Gallery*, and *Hustler.* Moreover, the author noted numerous aesthetic characteristics of the photographs and models that distinguished the two categories. For example, the study noted that upper-class magazines emphasized youth and beauty in terms of models, their surroundings, and photograph composition. Working-class magazines contain models of greater ethnic variety and wider age range, and the photographs emphasized explicit depictions of the female genitalia. Research has also found that sexually explicit magazines reinforce racist ethnic stereotypes, such as portraying Latino women as sexually insatiable. In addition, a longitudinal review of *Playboy* magazine provided data to support the argument that pornographic magazines have grown increasingly explicit over time.

One additional aspect of pornography that has received considerable attention has been the presence of sexually violent content. Studies have found differing amounts of sexually violent content in pornographic magazines, leading some scholars to trivialize the presence of such content. Indeed, some studies have argued that the increased presence of such content throughout the 1970s was an aberration, and the presence of sexual violence in both photographs and cartoons is rare. Nonetheless, contemporary research continues to find sexually violent themes in sexually explicit magazines and videos and on the Internet.

EXPOSURE TO AND EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHIC MAGAZINES

Surveys of teens and young adults indicate that exposure to some form of sexually explicit photos and magazines is extremely common. One survey of teens and young adults ages 13 to 24 revealed that 100% of

males age 16 and older, and nearly as many females, report having seen soft-core sexual content such as *Playboy* magazine. These figures are only slightly smaller for younger teens ages 13 to 15, as 92% of males and 84% of females report having seen similar content. What's more, the average age of first exposure to these magazines was 11 for males and 12 for females. Older teens reported having seen more sexually explicit magazines than younger teens. Males 16 to 18 years old reported seeing an average of 16.1 magazines, whereas those 13 to 15 years old reported seeing an average of 5.2 magazines. Across all age ranges, females reported seeing fewer magazines, with older teens reporting an average of 5.7 magazines and younger teens reporting 2.2 issues.

Although differences in survey techniques and questions make comparisons across time difficult, prior studies generally reported lower rates of exposure, suggesting that the use of pornographic magazines has increased over time. The increased popularity of the Internet has shifted the focus of concerns from pornographic magazines to websites, and recent survey data indicates that 70% of teens report having unintentionally seen pornography while searching for other content. These figures were higher for teens searching for health information. Such reports underscore critics' concerns over teenagers' exposure to pornographic content. Studies have noted that teens often look to the media as a source for sexual information. One of the overarching concerns regarding adolescents' exposure to pornographic magazines is that these images serve as inappropriate learning tools. Critics argue that many children are first exposed to human sexuality via adult-oriented magazines, videos, or Internet pornography. This exposure may be particularly harmful because it comes at a point in childhood development when young people are forming long-lasting impressions about sexual behavior. In addition to distorting children's views on sexuality, pornographic magazines may also have behavioral effects as well, causing children to imitate behaviors seen in adult magazines and videos.

Although the effects may be indirect, scholars have also examined pornography's harmful effects on the family. Research has demonstrated that exposure to pornography results in reduced marital satisfaction and reduced reproductive desire. In addition, increased attention has been given recently to pornography addiction, which can cause harm to children as parents withdraw emotionally from the family. Pornography addiction can also result in actual physical withdrawal from the family environment as the parent spends increased time consuming sexually explicit content.

Social scientists have expended considerable effort examining the effects of pornography consumption, although ethical standards prohibit conducting such research on young teens and adolescents. Nonetheless, many studies have used college student populations as research participants, and many empirical studies report having participants as young as 18. Such research has linked the consumption of sexually explicit content with increased acceptance of rape myths and the increased trivialization of rape crimes. Numerous other harmful effects have been documented due to exposure to filmed depictions of sexually explicit content, including increased preference for nonstandard sexual practices such as bestiality and sadomasochism, decreased satisfaction with marital partners, and increased acceptance of pre- and extramarital sexual relations. Research examining pornographic magazines has also found a significant positive correlation between state-by-state circulation rates of sexually explicit magazines and rape rates. Most contemporary pornography research examines Internet pornography and sex addiction.

—R. Glenn Cummins

See also Child Pornography; Desensitization Effects; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Movies, Sexuality in; Obscenity; Physiological Arousal; Pornography (various entries); Sexual Information, Internet and; Sexualized Violence; Violence, Desensiti-zation Toward

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PORNOGRAPHY, MOVIES

The end of the 20th century brought the mainstreaming of pornography in the United States, as a once-underground business came into homes, offices, and hotel rooms aided by technological, legal, and political changes. At the same time, the pornography industry's products became increasingly graphic, explicit, and degrading, pushing society's boundaries.

The term *pornography* is sometimes used to describe all sexually explicit books, magazines, movies, and Internet sites, with a distinction made between soft-core (nudity with limited sexual activity not including penetration) and hard-core (graphic images of actual, not simulated sexual activity including penetration). In other uses, the term is juxtaposed to *erotica* (material that depicts sexual behavior with mutuality and respect), leaving pornography as the term for material depicting sex with domination or degradation. Laboratory studies of pornography's effects commonly use three categories: overtly violent, nonviolent but degrading, and sexually explicit but neither violent nor degrading.

Heterosexual pornography makes up the bulk of the commercial market. There is a significant amount of gay male pornography available, with a smaller amount of material produced commercially for lesbians. Pornography is distributed using all communication technologies: printing, photographs, film, telephones, video, DVD, and computers. *Playboy*, which debuted in December 1953, was the first sex magazine to break into mainstream distribution channels. In the 1960s and 1970s, pornographic films moved into public theaters. In the 1980s, video swamped other forms of pornography, with the number of new pornographic video titles released each year increasing from 1,500 in 1986 to 11,000 in 2001. Computers emerged as a major vehicle for pornography in the 1990s, although the future legal status of online pornography is unclear after the Supreme Court threw out much of the Communications Decency Act, a controversial part of the 1996 telecommunications law that prohibited not only obscene but indecent material that could be viewed by children. For now, the Internet remains home to large amounts of pornography—stories, photographs, video, and interactive material.

The two main categories in today's pornographic movie industry are features and "wall-to-wall/gonzo." Features, shot mostly on video but occasionally on film, have a traditional three-act script with some plot and characters. The industry markets these as "couples' movies" that can appeal to women as well as the traditional male audience. Wall-to-wall movies are all-sex productions that have no pretense of plot or dialogue. Many of these movies are shot gonzo style, in which performers acknowledge the camera and often speak directly to the audience. The best-known production companies closest to the mainstream, such as Vivid and Wicked, specialize in features; however, the bulk of the market is wall-to-wall/gonzo movies. In addition, there are specialty titles—movies that feature sadomasochism and bondage, fetish material, transsexuals—that fill niche markets.

The majority of hard-core movies include oral, vaginal, and anal sex, almost always ending with ejaculation on the woman. In the wall-to-wall/gonzo movies, double penetration (anal and vaginal penetration by two men at the same time) and aggressive oral penetration of women are increasingly common, as are hair pulling, slapping, and rough treatment. As these movies push the limits of overt violence and brutality, pornography producers search for new ways to attract male viewers looking for increased stimulation.

In the 1973 *Miller v. California* decision, the Supreme Court established a three-part test for defining obscenity (material that appeals to the prurient interest; portrays sexual conduct in a patently offensive way; and does not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value) and identified contemporary community standards as the measure of evaluation. Although a strict application of state and federal obscenity laws could lead to prosecution of much contemporary pornography, enforcement usually occurs only where there is political support from citizens. This prosecutorial discretion means material for sale openly in one jurisdiction may not be available in another. However,

the availability of mail-order and computer pornography ensures that graphic, sexually explicit material can be obtained easily anywhere. The only exception is child pornography—material that is made either using children or, in the digital age, through the use of technology that makes it appear the sexual activity uses children. The former is illegal without question (*New York v. Ferber*, 1982) and available only underground; the legal status of the latter remains uncertain (*Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition*, 2002).

Until the 1970s, debates over pornography pitted liberal advocates of sexual freedom against conservative proponents of traditional sexual morality. That changed with the feminist critique of pornography, which emerged out of the struggle against sexual violence during the women's movement in the 1960s and focused on the way in which pornography eroticizes domination and subordination. Feminist critics argued for a focus not on subjective sexual mores but on the harm to women used in pornography and against whom pornography is used.

Much of the debate about pornography concerns the question of effects. Does pornography, particularly material that explicitly eroticizes violence or domination, result in sexual violence against women, children, and other vulnerable people? Pornography's supporters and some researchers argue there is no conclusive evidence. Other researchers contend the evidence points to some kind of effects with some groups of men. No one argues that pornography is the sole causal factor in rape; the question is whether the use of pornography can be considered a sufficient condition for triggering a sexual assault. Because experimental research on such topics using minors is more difficult and ethically problematic, there are few data specifically about pornography's effects on children and adolescents.

Many feminists have argued that attention to the experiences of men and women—both those who use pornography and those against whom pornography is used—makes the connection clear. Such accounts provide specific examples of how pornography can (1) be an important factor in shaping a male-dominant view of sexuality, (2) contribute to a user's difficulty in separating sexual fantasy and reality, (3) be used to initiate victims and break down resistance to sexual activity, and (4) provide a training manual for abuse.

It is difficult to make reliable estimates of children's use of, or access to, pornography, whether in traditional print, movie, or computer form. A 2004 United Kingdom study found that 57% of young people ages 9 to 19 have come into contact with pornography online, which seems a plausible, although perhaps conservative estimate. Whatever the actual percentage, as pop culture more generally turns toward pornographic conventions, the exposure of children and adolescents to pornographic images and values is best understood as a continuum; all are exposed to some level of the pornographic, and it is likely those various levels are mutually reinforcing. The complexity at this level makes it difficult to isolate the specific effects of any one medium or genre.

—Robert Jensen

See also Pornography, Regulation of; Pornography, U.S. Public Policy on

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PORNOGRAPHY, REGULATION OF

The regulation of sexual content has a long and varied history in the United States. Borrowing initially from English common law, American legislatures and courts have over the years developed ways to regulate sexual content; these evolved into a test that has been in place since 1973.

At the outset, however, it should be noted that the terms *pornography* and *obscenity* have different legal definitions. Once sexual material has been found to be legally obscene, it is no longer protected by the First Amendment. Pornographic material retains some First Amendment protection in that consenting adults may continue to create, purchase, distribute, and consume it. *Indecency* has yet a third definition; it is applied to the broadcast media and aimed toward protecting

children. This article will focus primarily on the regulation of obscenity and child pornography.

EARLY ENGLISH LAW

As early as 1868, English courts were considering how to regulate sexual content. In *Regina v. Hicklin,* an English judge held that sexual materials should be considered in light of their effect on the most susceptible members of society. Furthermore, the material could be removed from its context and considered alone to determine its impact. This standard was applied in the United States from colonial times through the 1930s, and it was included in the 1873 Comstock Act, which made it illegal to send any "obscene, lewd, or lascivious" books through the mail. The Comstock Act was used to punish individuals offering contraception products through the mail.

ROTH TO *MILLER*

The U.S. Supreme Court's first attempt to define obscenity—that is, sexual material that receives no First Amendment protection—was in the 1957 case of *Roth v. United States.* In this case involving two plaintiffs who sold sexual materials and advertised them through the mail, the Court held for the first time that material deemed legally obscene was outside the protections of the First Amendment. The Court eliminated the *Hicklin* requirements involving the material's effect on the least susceptible person and the ability of the court to remove the material from its context. Instead, the Court advanced the first legal definition of obscenity: "whether, to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest" and is "utterly without redeeming social importance." (*Prurient* means lascivious or displaying inordinate interest in sex.)

This standard proved difficult to interpret and apply. Following several years of cases wherein the Court could not decide what was obscene and what was not (prompting the famous and oft-quoted Potter Stewart line from the 1964 case, *Jacobellis v. Ohio:* "But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that"), the Court refined the obscenity test in 1973 in *Miller v. California.*

This case, which involved a mass mailing to advertise pornographic books, provides the current test for obscenity. A work is considered to be obscene if (1) an average person, applying contemporary community standards, finds the work, taken as a whole, to appeal to the prurient interest; (2) the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct described in the applicable state law; and (3) the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. If all three elements of this test are met, the work is legally obscene and without First Amendment protection.

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Child pornography is a problem of special interest to courts and legislatures. The basic rule of thumb is that all child pornography, work featuring minors engaged in sexual activity, has no First Amendment protection. That is, the *Miller* test need not even be applied. In the 1982 case of *New York v. Ferber,* the Supreme Court said that states need not adhere to *Miller* to be able to punish child pornography. States have greater leeway in seeking out and punishing child pornographers because the stakes for the children involved are so high. In addition, the goal of eliminating the market for child pornography is compelling.

In 1990, in *Osborne v. Ohio,* the Court permitted the punishment of individuals for the possession of child pornography. Relying on its arguments in *Ferber,* the Court said that such penalties furthered the goal of reducing the market for child pornography products.

ANIMATED PORNOGRAPHY

In the 2002 case of *Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition,* the Court made a distinction between pornography that uses real children and that which uses animated cartoons that may resemble children. In so doing, the Court struck down the portion of the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996 (CPPA) that punished sexual materials that "appear to be" of minors or that "convey the impression" that they contain minors. Virtual child pornography, said the Court, does not harm children in the ways that real child pornography does—by its creation and perpetually through its distribution. If no children are harmed in the making of virtual child pornography, the Court said, the government may not penalize its creation.

Congress responded to this decision with the PROTECT (Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today) Act of 2003. The act asserts that the majority of child pornography

today exists on computer hard drives and that although it is cost-prohibitive to generate child pornography from scratch using computer technology, it is cheap to use images of real children and alter them so that they become unrecognizable as initially real. The act punishes digital, computer, or computer-generated images that are, or are "indistinguishable from," those of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct (tightening the language that was struck down in the *Free Speech Coalition* case). Tougher penalties were also added, and the act encourages voluntary reporting by Internet service providers of child pornography found on their servers.

The PROTECT Act became controversial (and was even attacked by Chief Justice William Rehnquist in 2004) because it includes a section that would single out and keep track of judges who issue lighter than maximum sentences ("downward departures") in child pornography cases. Judicial commentators have suggested that this congressional mandate was passed without consultation with the judiciary.

—Genelle Belmas

See also First Amendment; Internet Pornography, Effects of

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PORNOGRAPHY, U.S. PUBLIC POLICY ON

There are a range of questions and opinions in the United States concerning the propriety and acceptability of pornography, based on distinctions such as type of material and age of consumer. Moral outrage toward the involvement of children and young adolescents in the production of sexually explicit materials is the norm, however. By law, children and adolescents below the age of 18 are not permitted any access to pornographic materials in any form, and both the actual distribution and the intended dissemination of such materials to underage consumers are illegal. The advent of the World Wide Web has made access to all forms of pornography simple and inexpensive. For the above reasons, federal regulation of the production and distribution of pornography has grown more and more conservative over time, so that there are more restrictions on accessing pornographic materials and on the inclusion of children in their production. Opposition typically focuses on issues of free speech, juxtaposing the harm access to pornography may cause with the harm restrictions might inflict. Restrictions on juvenile participation in the production of pornographic materials have general support.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are those currently in use by the U.S. federal government:

Pornography. The term *pornography* is defined as any material created in an effort to provoke sexual interest. This is an exceptionally broad definition and can legitimately embrace *Playboy* magazine and NC-17 rated films, Harlequin romance fiction, and music videos featuring scantily clad performers.

Child pornography. Child pornography refers to any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct,

within any medium and produced by any means, that (1) involves the actual participation of a minor, (2) involves a character indistinguishable from a minor, or (3) has been made to present the impression of direct participation by a minor. For the purposes of this definition, *sexually explicit conduct* was defined by the Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to end the Exploitation of Children Today (PROTECT) Act as graphic sexual intercourse, bestiality, masturbation, sadistic or masochistic abuse, real or simulated, of any sort, or a similar presentation of human genitals or pubic areas. Examples can range from films of prepubescent children engaging in sexual acts with adults, to a webcam picture of a nude 17-year-old. The actual language of the PROTECT Act has recently come under fire, as it says that a visual depiction can be considered child pornography if it shows a person of legal majority but that person is "virtually indistinguishable" from an actual minor. The constitutionality of this reading is currently under review.

Obscene/Obscenity. The term *obscenity,* referring to that which is obscene, is defined as something that an average person, applying the current societal values, would find (1) appeals to sexual interests in a way that also produces feelings of shame or obsession, (2) presents in a blatantly outrageous way that which can be described as sexual activity, and (3) is without true worth according to the standards of any discipline. Examples will necessarily depend on the local community, but common practice has been to judge those standards based on as conservative a framework as possible. What this means is that whereas those living in an undergraduate all-male dorm may find a magazine or film-clip tame, the broader community of permanent residents may not, and it could therefore be defined as obscene.

U.S. POLICY

The current policy of the U.S. government is that whereas pornography in general is entitled to protection under the First Amendment, that protection is not to be extended to materials that are defined as obscene or as child pornography, also known as "kiddie porn." In recent years, the United States has leaned toward a zero-tolerance approach to child pornography. The U.S. Supreme Court under Chief Justice William Rehnquist in July 1990 held that a citizen's right to privacy does not extend toward any materials defined as child pornography.

Current efforts are focused on prosecuting those creating, distributing, and collecting child pornography, as well as requiring agencies and organizations receiving federal funds to block Internet access to sites considered obscene, harmful to minors, or hosting child pornography. On an international level, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography prohibits the sale of child pornography. Although the United States has yet to ratify the principle Convention on the Rights of the Child, it ratified this Optional Protocol in December 2002.

LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT

The amount of federal legislation relating to pornography has grown in recent years, as has the number of agencies formed to prevent juvenile access to or participation in it.

Recent Legislation

Recent laws relating to children and adolescents and pornography include strictures against the creation of misleading Internet domain names in an effort to trick someone into viewing restricted materials; provisions for the seizure of property gained through child pornography-related activities; or bans on engaging in the production of child pornography outside U.S. boundaries for the purposes of eventual U.S. importation. The Children's Internet Protection Act requires schools and libraries that receive federal funds for computer purchase or Internet access to implement filtering systems to block obscene materials from juveniles. Two proposed measures are specifically related to children and adolescents. The Internet Safety and Child Protection Act of 2005, currently being referred to the U.S. Sentate's Subcommittee on Select Education, proposes to tighten the age verification requirements of those who operate "adult" websites and to levy a tax equal to 25% of the site membership fees, with those funds going to law enforcement organizations and measures to fight Internet and pornography-related crimes that impact children directly. The revised Children's Safety Act of 2005 provides for establishing a Children's Safety Office under the Department of Justice, enhancing sentencing

requirements, and providing more specified language regarding the definition of the phrase "the sexual exploitation of children," replacing it with "aggravated sexual abuse, sexual abuse, abusive sexual contact involving a minor or ward, or sex trafficking of children, or the production, possession, receipt, mailing, sale, distribution, shipment, or transportation of child pornography."

Law Enforcement Organizations

A large number of private, local, state, and federal organizations specifically target pornography as it relates to children and adolescents. These include the Association of Sites Advocating Child Protection, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Department of Justice, the Customs Service's CyberSmuggling Center and its Child Exploitation Unit, the FBI's Crimes Against Children program, the Innocent Images National Initiative, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

—Solomon Davidoff

See also Child Pornography; Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Internet Watch Foundation; Obscenity; Pornography (various entries); Regulation, Internet; Sex, Internet Solicitation of; Sexualization of Children; Sexualized Violence; Telecommunications Act of 1996; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; Webcams

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PORNOGRAPHY, X-RATED MOVIES AND

Since the origins of motion pictures, sex and nudity have been common subjects for films. Today, a wide variety of titles are freely available in many local video retailers, and consumers can access vastly larger catalogues of movies through various online rental and sales outlets. Although data on the number of adolescents exposed to such content are limited, surveys indicate the teens are being exposed to pornographic films at a younger age.

HISTORY OF X-RATED MOVIES

Although hardly salacious, some of Eadweard Muybridge's first experimental forays into motion pictures in the late 19th century consisted of filmed depictions of nude male and female models engaged in mundane tasks. Early motion-picture devices such as the kinetoscope allowed viewers to peer into a viewing device to witness racy vignettes of a female stripping or performing a seductive dance.

More sexually explicit films remained taboo in the United States for the first half of the 20th century. The quality of the films was poor, and none had sound. Moreover, distribution systems for sexually explicit films were primitive, and exhibition was private and limited to small groups of men. These "blue movies" or "stag films"—named for their male audience—bore little resemblance to their contemporary counterparts. The more progressive social climate of the 1960s led to increased acceptance of sexually explicit content of all varieties, and adult theaters that publicly screened pornographic films became increasingly common. Two films, *Deep Throat* and *Behind the Green Door*, both released in 1972, have been credited with ushering X-rated films into the mainstream of American society and reducing social stigmas associated with pornographic films.

In the late 1970s, exhibition of sexually explicit films in private homes was made possible with the advent of affordable video cassette players. Numerous scholars cite the adoption of VCRs to support the oft-made claim that pornography drives the development of new communications technology. Similar claims have been made about virtually all mass media, starting with the printing press and continuing to modern-day DVDs, personal computers, and the Internet. Sexually explicit films are also available via cable

systems by subscription and pay-per-view. Moreover, the rapid growth of broadband Internet technology is also fulfilling the promise of video-on-demand, making entire libraries of pornographic films available for download at a moment's notice.

Today, the adult film industry remains vibrant and profitable. The adult industry on the whole is estimated to make billions of dollars in profits each year, and cable operators alone make anywhere from $50 million to $500 million each year from adult programming. Moreover, the adult film and video industry is represented by its own association, which tracks sales and rentals of adult titles, holds a yearly convention and awards ceremony, and even publishes a member directory.

Perhaps the dominant theme of X-rated films and videos is that of sex without commitment. Characters are rarely portrayed as married or in monogamous relationships, and they are sometimes portrayed as strangers or only recent acquaintances. Some scholars have noted the presence of sexually violent themes in X-rated films, although research surrounding the topic is conflicting. Some empirical data suggest that these themes are not the norm. Moreover, data have shown that depictions of sexual aggression with positive outcomes for the victim are rare. Similar studies argue that although sexually violent themes are not the norm, they are common nonetheless. Scholars have also analyzed pornographic films to demonstrate the presence of negative gender and racial stereotypes.

CONTENT OF X-RATED MOVIES

Examinations of sexually explicit content are made difficult by a multitude of labels and distinctions, some of which are grounded in fact and some of which are rather arbitrary. For example, feminist critics of sexually explicit content draw a distinction between pornography—which focuses on violence, domination, and conquest—and erotica—which focuses on consensual sexual behavior. Clearly, the labels leave abundant room for subjective judgment. With respect to films and videos, the most accepted dichotomy is between hard-core or triple-X films and soft-core erotica. As the name implies, hard-core films are characterized by much more graphic depictions of sexual acts, and they are generally less socially acceptable than soft-core films.

Although countless X-rated titles are widely available to consumers, little empirical research has comprehensively examined the content and themes that make up the adult film universe. The dominant content of adult videos is the depiction of males and females engaged in a variety of sexual acts, including vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, and oral sex. Films focusing on masturbation most frequently feature females rather than males. Although not the majority, films focusing on other sexual behaviors such as bondage, sadomasochism, homosexual behavior, and transgender sexual behavior are common. Films focusing on illegal behavior such as child pornography are not distributed through traditional channels, although observers have noted that the development of the Internet has resulted in the spread of such materials. The majority of characters appearing in X-rated videos appear to be in their late teens through 30 years of age and are white.

EXPOSURE TO AND EFFECTS OF X-RATED MOVIES

Scholars have devoted considerable attention to obtaining normative measures of exposure to sexually explicit content, including pornographic videos. Some of the most widely cited data were collected in the 1980s and indicate that nearly half of teens 13 to 15 years old, and 84% of teens 16 to 18 years old, reported having seen X-rated films containing explicit sexual content, although results suggest that exposure was not frequent. However, survey data indicated that the age of first exposure to such material decreased as a function of respondents' age, meaning that teens are exposed to pornographic films at a younger age. Contemporary data regarding exposure to sexual content focuses on sex in mainstream television, films, and magazines or Internet pornography. Thus, reliable up-to-date figures regarding exposure to pornographic videos are not available. Nonetheless, comparison of survey data dating from the 1970s suggests an increase in the number of adolescents who had seen pornographic films. Early surveys of young adults ages 17 to 24 indicated that a majority of male adolescents (53%) and an even greater majority of females (88%) reported having *never* seen a pornographic film at all, let alone more than one. Recent data regarding teens' exposure to Internet pornography indicate that exposure to pornographic content has increased, as 70% of teens 15 to 17 years old report *unintentional* exposure to pornographic content online. Clearly, the opportunity for exposure to sexually explicit content has grown.

An abundance of research has focused on assessing the potentially harmful effects of pornography on

society, although virtually all such research has focused on adult exposure. Ethical standards governing social science research obviously prohibit testing the effects of exposure to pornography on children and young teens. However, much empirical research routinely uses college students as young as 18 years old to serve as research participants, and the same is true of research examining sexually explicit content. Thus, most results are generalizable to the young adult population.

One of the primary effects of the consumption of sexually explicit videos is desensitization and habituation. Exposure to pornography can also result in physiological habituation, such that viewers are no longer aroused by sexually explicit content that once elicited excitation. In addition, research has demonstrated that viewers will seek increasingly hard-core and atypical pornographic material after prolonged exposure to sexually explicit films, presumably to seek this excitatory state. Exposure to massive amounts of pornography has also resulted in increased estimations of the prevalence of nonstandard sexual behavior such as sadomasochism, bestiality, and nonexclusivity among sexual partners. Moreover, exposure to pornographic films has led some research participants to place less value on the institution of marriage and to report reduced reproductive desire. Finally, prolonged exposure to pornography has also been shown to result in decreased satisfaction with one's own intimate partner in terms of physical appearance, sexual curiosity, and sexual performance.

Some scholars have also expended considerable effort exploring the effects of sexually violent media content. Numerous studies have demonstrated that viewers who were exposed to pornographic films over an extended period of time viewed rape as a more trivial offense. Moreover, this effect has been found in studies examining both sexually violent and nonviolent pornography, as well as some R-rated action and horror films that dwell on female victimization.

Although most research has focused on the negative effects of exposure to pornographic films, select studies have examined potentially beneficial uses of pornography. Such work has focused largely on the treatment of sexual dysfunction, although scholars have also advocated the use of sexually explicit content as an educational tool.

—R. Glenn Cummins

See also Child Pornography; Desensitization Effects; Ethnicity, Race, and Media; Movies, Sexuality in; Obscenity; Physiological Arousal; Pornography (various entries); Sexual Information, Internet and; Sexualized Violence; Violence, Desensiti-zation Toward

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PRESCHOOLERS, MEDIA IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF

The preschool years, roughly defined as 2 to 6 years old, are unique in the development of children's interaction with media. As children mature, their access to and use of the media, as well as their content preferences and tastes, change dramatically. The underlying assumption of the various psychological approaches that center on the interaction of the individual child with the media is that, with experience, children's

cognitive, emotional, and social skills develop over time. Stage theories assume that human development proceeds through universal chronological stages. Accordingly, they suggest that the preschool years are a unique stage of development with its own special behavioral and cognitive characteristics termed *pre-operational* by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget.

The pre-operational stage is characterized mainly by the acquisition of language. This allows representative thought, expanding the youngster's experiences beyond the "here and now" of the senses and motor activities that characterize the earlier stage of development. Thus, the child is able to think and talk about television experiences outside of the viewing situation. However, at this stage, the child is unable to perform many of the more advanced mental activities typical of older children at the next stage—concrete operations.

MEDIA USE

Preschoolers apply their developing cognitive skills to the media as to any other aspect of their lives. Such capabilities determine in large degree what they use and attend to as well as the kind of meaning they make of these experiences. Indeed, recent studies that explored young children's exposure to media reveal that use of all media increases when children move into preschool years: viewing television and videos/DVD levels off around 3 to 4 years old and then declines before peaking later in mid-childhood, whereas reading and computer use, which require special skills, continue to increase linearly until entering school. Interestingly, income is not related to most American children's amount of media use. This suggests that the infiltration of media in young children's life has become a universal phenomenon in developed societies.

Similarly, there are no significant gender differences in media use at this age, except for the use of video games, which are more popular among boys of all ages. Television and video/DVD viewing, reading, or computer use were found to be quite similar for both preschool boys and girls. However, viewing is related to parental education: Children of less educated parents watched more television. Higher parental education and income are also associated with having viewing rules for their children in regard to the amount of time and the kinds of programs viewed. Computer access, too, is related to families' socioeconomic status, as youngsters growing up in families with higher income and education are more likely to own a computer and to have Internet access.

Television remains the most central medium for this age group, if one includes all technologies and forms of transmission (i.e., broadcast, cable, satellite, videotapes, DVD). The growing body of research on preschoolers in the developed world has found great variability in the amount of viewing time at this age; however, 2 to 3 viewing hours a day are often reported. The variance depends, among other things, on the measure used (e.g., parental reports, observations, computerized rating measures). For example, children who live in homes where the television set is constantly on were found to spend more time viewing television and less time reading in comparison to children where the television was turned on only to view particular programs.

VIEWING PREFERENCES

Research has found that, at an average age of 2½ years, many youngsters are capable of and willing to stay tuned to a program that interests them for a full half hour or even more. They have favorite programs and tend to know when and on which channel they are broadcast. This age coincides with the transition into the language-oriented pre-operational stage of cognitive development along with other physiological and social changes typical of this age group.

As toddlers grow into preschoolers, they gradually become more interested in and able to comprehend narratives as well as diverse magazine formats. However, they continue to need more time than adults to process television images and thus prefer slower paced programming; compared to older children, they enjoy lots of repetition. Preschoolers show a strong preference for programs produced specially for them that combine segments of animation, puppets, documentaries, and drama (e.g., *Sesame Street*). Such programs are designed with the understanding that preschoolers' attention span and viewing preferences develop gradually. Thus, magazines may adopt a "quilted" format that offers a variety of segments, providing each child the opportunity to interact according to individual needs and abilities. From about the age of 5 or 6, children start developing preferences for more fast-paced programs and more complicated content and start gradually to disassociate themselves from clearly educational and "safe" preschool programs.

ATTENTION TO TELEVISION

In contrast to some populist claims that preschoolers are "hooked" on or "hypnotized" by media, research has found that preschool viewers clearly demonstrate frequent changes in orientation, moving their focus back and forth between the screen and the surrounding environment. Attention to television continues to grow as a function of the child's development, personality, program content, and environment. The ability to sustain interest in the television program for longer stretches of time and to manipulate their own attention to television as well as to competing activities is gradually strengthened and modified. By the age of 6, the child's attention to television can be sustained for long periods of time and remains so until adolescence. Attention to television during this period increases for content that the child is capable of understanding and decreases for incomprehensible content or content that seems to belong to the adults' world.

From a research perspective, the child needs to demonstrate some form of attention to television as a necessary condition for any thought-related processes. This is by no means a simple process to understand, as attention to television is not easily defined. Preschoolers, while visually oriented toward the screen, may be daydreaming or otherwise disengaged. Or, they could be playing with toys in front of the television, occasionally glancing at it following an audio cue such as a loud siren, a familiar commercial, or a child's giggle. The context may have a role in attention; for example, a variety of activities may take place simultaneously with viewing (e.g., snacking, playing), interchangeably with viewing (e.g., drawing a picture on the coffee table during the talk show but watching during the commercial break), or independent from it (e.g., looking at a picture book on the couch while the rest of the family is viewing a drama series).

To be sure, when the child is busy with a variety of activities, he or she may be regularly and subconsciously scanning the audio channel of the operating television set to detect sounds that indicate content changes. Audio cues (e.g., an opening tune of a favorite program, sudden noise, familiar voice) or behavioral cues from people may lead to a shift in attention level and orientation to the screen. Attention to television is also directed by a process of viewing inertia, which explains how children's viewing may overcome moments of comprehension "breakups" or changes in content types. The longer the period of time that a viewer continues to view television, the higher the chance that this behavior will continue, regardless of the viewing difficulties encountered. This process works in the opposite direction as well: The longer the child's visual orientation is away from the screen, the lower the chance that he or she will return to it. This process has been found to exist regardless of content and viewer's age.

COMPREHENSION OF TELEVISION CONTENT

Preschoolers have a fairly good grasp of some audiovisual conventions and are able to discriminate between different program genres, including the distinction between programs and commercials. Yet, the research literature suggests that preschoolers have a very different understanding of television content and television as a medium than do older children and youth.

For example, one particular area of interest in the developmental psychology literature is changes in young children's ability to distinguish between real and fantasy dimensions of television. Most preschoolers are able to distinguish between real objects and televised images as well as between human actors and cartoon characters. They recognize the factuality of news, but only gradually make correct judgments about fictional dimensions of television entertainment as they mature. In general, they lack the understanding that television programs are staged and that television characters are portrayed by actors. They have only a partial understanding of the persuasive intent of television commercials, to which they are highly attracted.

An integrative review of the developmental literature suggests that preschoolers and kindergartners differ from older children in their cognitive abilities to understand television and that with maturation, they gradually acquire abilities in the following areas: (a) the understanding of story lines and narratives, including the ability to reconstruct events, understand sequence, distinguish between central and incidental information, connect causes to consequences, and the like; (b) the understanding of characters such that they are able to describe characters not only by exterior appearance, but also by personality traits, motivations, feelings, personal history, and social orientation, as well as the contexts in which they interrelate with others; (c) the understanding of audiovisual language, including the ability to identify and to understand the

codes and conventions of audiovisual expressions, such as special effects, shooting angles, slow and fast motion, and the like; (d) the understanding that all forms of television are a production, even realistic genres, and that each television text involves actions by many professions and roles. Generally, preschoolers do not understand that television is an industry that functions within a complicated system of economic, social, political, legal, and human constraints that influence its content in various ways. Nor do they understand the interrelationships between television and reality, including TV's selective nature, its role in creating as well as representing certain parts of reality, and its contribution to the construction of our worldview.

FEAR REACTIONS TO TELEVISION

Contrary to what might be expected, preschoolers do not become less easily frightened as they grow older. Rather, what seems to happen is that they are less bothered by some stimuli that concerned them in the past, while other stimuli that had never elicited reactions in the past do so as they mature. More specifically, preschoolers are typically scared of animals, supernatural forces (such as ghosts, witches, and monsters), and things that look anomalous or move unexpectedly. They might be more afraid of something that looks dangerous but in fact is not than something that does not look dangerous but in fact is. This process will be reversed during school years. Thus, young children react more fearfully to imaginary programs (e.g., cartoons, monsters) than to real dangers (e.g., news reports about an anticipated natural disaster). In addition, cognitive comforting strategies such as explanations that "this is not real" or "this is happening very far away" are less effective than behavioral comforting strategies, such as a hug or offering a snack.

—Dafna Lemish

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Television, Attention and; Television, Child Variables and Use of; Television, Viewer Age and

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PRIMING THEORY

Cognitive and social psychologists have used priming paradigms since the early 1970s to study how humans process information and how that remembered information affects our behavior. As applied to the media, priming refers to the effects of the content in the media on people's later behavior or judgments. Priming has been used extensively to study the short-term effects of media violence and stereotyped portrayals of minorities and the long-term effects of political coverage on evaluations of a candidate.

Priming procedures were first used to explore the representation of information in memory. Some theories of memory, such as network models of memory, assume that information is stored in memory in the form of nodes and that each node represents a unique idea (e.g., there is a "Big Bird" node in memory). Furthermore, these nodes are connected to related nodes in memory by associative pathways (e.g., "Big Bird" is linked to *Sesame Street* or "Cookie Monster" or "the Muppets" but probably is not directly linked to "President Herbert Hoover"). Also, it is believed that each node has what is called an *activation threshold.*

If the node's level of activation exceeds its threshold, the node fires, and energy flows down network pathways from the node to other related nodes. For example, if the Big Bird node fires, activation spreads to related nodes, such as Cookie Monster. Once a related node is activated (in this example, Cookie Monster), it then requires less additional activation for it to fire. This means that the concept has been primed.

Cognitive psychologists have shown that the activation level of a node will dissipate over time if no additional source of activation is present. Eventually, given no more activation, the activation level of the node returns to its resting state, and it is no longer considered to be activated. In tasks that involve judgments or evaluations of a social stimulus, the priming effect will last up to 15 to 20 minutes and possibly up to 1 hour.

Social and developmental psychologists began using priming procedures in the late 1970s to study person perception, stereotyping, and attitude activation. For example, Graham and Hudley (1994) had middle school boys read a set of 10 sentences. For half of the boys, 8 of the 10 sentences dealt with negative outcomes that were under the control of the child in the sentence. For the other boys, 8 of the 10 sentences described the same outcome, but the child in the sentence was not responsible for the outcome. After completing this priming task, participants took part in what they thought was a second, unrelated study. In that study, participants were asked to imagine that they were at a water fountain and another student knocked into them, and they got water all over their shirt. The scenario was set up so that it was ambiguous whether the bump was deliberate or not. As predicted by priming theory, the boys who had read the sentences where the child was responsible for the negative outcome were more likely to judge that the child intentionally got them wet at the water fountain than were the boys who read the sentences where the child was not responsible for the negative outcome. In research of the priming effect, typically, the ambiguous information is biased toward the primes.

Research on priming has demonstrated two important characteristics of priming effects. First, the strength of a priming effect is a dual function of the *intensity* and the *recency* of the priming event. As for intensity, a stronger prime will result in higher activation levels in the target item, and its effect on the target will dissipate more slowly than a weaker prime. The strength or intensity of the prime can refer to the frequency of the prime (e.g., a single exposure to a gun versus five exposures to a gun in quick succession) or the duration of the priming event. Recency simply refers to the time lag between the prime and the target (e.g., the time between seeing a gun on TV and seeing an ambiguous behavior that could be interpreted as hostile). Recent primes are stronger than temporally distant primes.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also Aggression, Movies and; Aggression, Television and; Cognitive Script Theory; Cuing and Priming; Media Effects, Models of

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PRIX JEUNESSE FOUNDATION

PRIX JEUNESSE is the premier international children's television organization. Through its biannual competition, its networking and coordination efforts, and its outreach programs, the foundation strives to promote quality children's programming around the world.

The PRIX JEUNESSE Foundation was established in 1964 as a coordinated effort between the German government and German broadcasting corporations. Since its inception, the foundation has created ties with other global organizations, such as UNESCO, the Goethe Institute, the European Broadcasting Union, and the Centre International pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse (CIFEJ) to increase its reach.

ACTIVITIES OF PRIX JEUNESSE

The most important function of PRIX JEUNESSE has always been the biannual festival, the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL. The purpose of this competition is threefold: to highlight exceptional work that is being done in children's television programming worldwide, to provide a forum for discussion of important issues in children's television, and to provide an arena for global networking within the children's television community. The competition is open to broadcasters across the globe, and winning its coveted award has become the highest honor in children's television programming.

The PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL is held every other year in Munich, Germany, where members of the global children's television community from industry, advocacy, and academia meet to view the submissions, discuss them in small groups, and judge the entries. The small discussion groups have become a core element of the festival. The discussions allow participants from around the world to better understand how people with various backgrounds react to the programs and to recognize new trends or innovations in programming that they can take back to their home country. The key outcome of this festival is the creation of a "market of great ideas."

To foster the dissemination of these ideas, the foundation has created the PRIX JEUNESSE Suitcase. The foundation works with festival participants to "pack" a Suitcase for them to take back to their home country as a training tool. Although the content of each Suitcase varies depending on the needs of the audience, it always includes a sampling of the best and most innovative entries from the festival. In addition to providing packaged training materials, PRIX JEUNESSE has also developed several training programs. These workshops are given in coordination with local media organizations and focus on the current needs of the organization, country, or region.

Finally, PRIX JEUNESSE functions as a global lobbyist for quality, innovative children's programming through creating and fostering regional networks. Regional partners include the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), PRIX JEUNESSE IBEROAMERICANO, the African Radio and Television Union (URTNA), and the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU). PRIX JEUNESSE works to connect the people and activities of these regional organizations through joint initiatives. For example, PRIX JEUNESSE recently worked with producers from Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, and Kosovo to create a Balkan children's TV magazine co-production to be aired in all of the countries. The 15-minute weekly magazine for 9-to-14-year-olds emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding and began airing in October 2004.

—J. Alison Bryant

See also Media Advocacy; Media Education, International; Television, International Viewing Patterns and; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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WEBSITE

PRIX JEUNESSE website: http://www.prixjeunesse.de

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS, ALCOHOL

The placement of different brands of alcohol in movies has a long tradition, and product placements

of alcohol also appear frequently in rap songs. Although concerns have been raised about the impact of such placements on adolescent drinking, research is needed to explore the influence of product placements on adolescents' attitudes toward drinking, their perceptions of the normative appropriateness of drinking and the prevalence of drinking, and whether placements influence adolescent drinking behavior.

One early example of product placement of alcohol in movies is the 1945 movie, *Mildred Pierce*, in which Joan Crawford—who received the best actress Academy Award for this role—drank Jack Daniel's whiskey. Perhaps a better known example is Katharine Hepburn's discarding Humphrey Bogart's—he received the best actor Academy Award for this role—Gordon's Dry Gin into the river in *The African Queen* (1951). The placement of alcohol products in the media is widespread. A content analysis of the top 10 movies each year of the 1990s found that the two most popular placements in these movies were for soft drinks and beer. In 1997–1998, there were over 230 paid placements of alcoholic products in movies and more than 180 different paid placements in TV series. In 2005, the first product placement on Broadway was for Jose Cuervo tequila in the Neil Simon play, *Sweet Charity*. Simon agreed to changes in the script so that the placement could occur. Likewise, recent studies of popular music have found that close to half of all rap songs mentioned specific brands of alcohol.

Why have product placements become so prominent? One reason is that audiences seem to like product placements because they make the TV show or movie seem more realistic. Indeed, early product placements simply involved a company providing its product to production companies for use in movies. More recently, product placements have developed into a form of paid advertising, where the company pays for the product to be used in a movie or TV show; more prominent product placements cost more than simple background placements of the product. Indeed, the practice should be called *brand* placement because the investment in placements is not to increase the use of the product category; rather, companies hope the placement will increase the use of their brand of the product. For example, sales of Red Stripe beer reportedly increased 50% after it appeared in the movie, *The Firm*. A second reason why placements may be so popular is the practice allows advertisers to target very specific audiences because the demographics of who attends which kinds of movies are well understood. Third, compared to paid advertisements, product placements are cheap.

The concern about alcohol product placements involves their effect on children's and adolescents' likelihood of drinking alcohol. A 1998 survey found that 50% of all high school seniors reported drinking at least once in the past month, and 31.5% of the seniors had engaged in binge drinking (defined as five or more drinks in a single drinking episode). However, as the American Medical Association notes in a 2001 report on underage drinking, there is a distinct lack of research on the influence of product placements on adolescent drinking.

Research does suggest that people are less approving of placement of alcohol and tobacco in movies and on TV than they are of other types of product placements. But adolescents, in general, like product placements more than adults. In addition, adolescents who watch lots of movies tend to be more brand conscious and pay more attention to product placements in the media. Finally, adolescents tend to perceive that other people are influenced by product placements but that they are immune to the effects of placements.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Advertising, Effects on Children of; Advertising, Health and; Alcohol Advertising, International; Product Placements (various entries)

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PRODUCT PLACEMENT, CIGARETTES

Hollywood has known for a long time about the power of product placements in the movies—the positioning of name-brand products, either for payment or free of charge, to increase sales. In fact, during the 1930s and 1940s, tobacco companies paid movie stars thousands of dollars to endorse their brands. In the 1970s and 1980s, the practice became widespread among Hollywood studios, despite their denials: According to internal documents from the Brown & Williamson company, Sylvester Stallone guaranteed use of their brand of cigarettes in at least five films (including *Rambo* and *Rocky IV*) for a total fee of $500,000. The Philip Morris Company reportedly paid $350,000 to place Lark cigarettes in the James Bond movie, *License to Kill,* and another $42,500 to place Marlboros in *Superman II*.

Direct payments for product placements of cigarettes supposedly ended in 1989, when the top 13 tobacco firms adopted the following guidelines to avoid federal regulation: "No payment, direct or indirect, shall be made for the placement of our cigarettes or cigarette advertisements in any film produced for viewing by the general public." The 1998 Master Settlement Agreement reached between tobacco companies and 46 states forbids this practice. Nevertheless, given the prevalence of cigarette smoking in current Hollywood movies, questions remain about whether product placement of cigarettes is occurring, to what extent, and why. In fact, the tobacco industry has been taking advantage of loopholes in the agreement by providing free promotional items to movie studios and to actors and actresses. In the past, the industry was known to have provided free cigarettes for use in adult films like *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *Grease*, and *Die Hard*. It also sent monthly mailings of free cigarettes to 1,888 actors and celebrities who smoke.

Smoking in Hollywood movies continues unabated. A content analysis of the top 25 box office hits from 1988 to 1997 found that 85% of the films contained tobacco use, with 28% containing recognizable brands. Actor endorsement of cigarette brands increased from 1% among the films produced between 1988 and 1990, before the voluntary ban on paid product placement by the tobacco industry, to 11% after the ban (1991 to 1997). Some critics assert that smoking in the movies is the single most powerful influence on young people today, accounting for more than half of all new teen smokers. In one study, smoking in the movies tripled the odds that a teen would try smoking, independent of whether his or her parents smoked.

Although smoking advertisements are banned on TV, smoking continues to be advertised via movie trailers. Ten movies in 2002 had a brand presence in the movie and smoking in the trailer. The TV ads for these 10 movies reached 93% of all 12-to-17-year-olds in the country, and 81% of all 12-to-17-year-olds saw at least one of these trailers three or more times.

—Victor C. Strasburger

See also Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Product Placements, Alcohol

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WEBSITE

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PRODUCT PLACEMENTS, FOOD

A product placement refers to the practice of placing a particular brand of a product in a movie. Many people recall a small boy leaving a trail of Reese's Pieces from a shed where an alien was hiding to the boy's house (indeed, people are probably more likely to remember the name of the candy than the boy's

name—Elliot). The consumption of Reese's Pieces increased by about 67% within a few months of the opening of the movie, *E.T.* Of course, generic candy (or even a fruit such as grapes) could have been used to draw the alien into the house.

Product placements are becoming increasingly popular; a recent content analysis of prime-time television found that, on average, there were close to 30 brand appearances per hour of prime-time programming. Indeed, products are placed in video games as well. Donkey Kong does not use just any banana—he uses Chiquita bananas.

One reason product placements are so popular may be that brand placement overcomes the problem of "zapping." A person is less likely to run to the kitchen when Reese's Pieces are being placed on the ground by a little boy during a movie than when a commercial is run for Reese's Pieces. Second, brand placements have a longer lifetime than typical advertisements. With the release of the 20th anniversary *E.T.*, Hershey's placement of Reese's Pieces may continue to be effective 20 years after the initial placement.

Much of the academic research has focused on the influence of product placements on memory of brands placed within movies or TV shows. The initial research was mixed. Sometimes, people showed very good memory of placements whereas other times, they recalled very few placements. More recently, researchers have started looking at implicit memory of product placements. Implicit memory involves demonstrating an effect of earlier exposure to a brand without explicitly asking people to remember what they saw earlier. For example, people may be asked to complete a series of word problems where they fill in missing letters to complete a word. This is called a word fragment completion task. For example, to test if people had implicit memory of Sprite in the movie, *The Client*, they were presented with a series of word puzzles including "S__ RI__ E." Research found that people who had seen the movie were more likely to complete the word fragment with SPRITE than people who had not seen the movie. Product placements consistently result in improved implicit memory for the products placed in a movie or video game.

The concern with food product placements is that they may be contributing to the alarming increase in childhood and adolescent obesity seen in the United States. Statistics suggest that as many as 15% of youth in the United States are obese. Rates of obesity are increasing at alarming rates. For example, the percentage of obese 6-to-11-year-olds increased from about 4% in the 1960s to 15.3% in 2000. The Surgeon General predicts that obesity may replace smoking as the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to ascertain the influence of brand placement because much of the data on brand placement is proprietary. Despite the resounding success of the Reese's Pieces story, the empirical research on brand placement is less encouraging, suggesting that the practice may not be as effective at increasing sales as some would like to believe. However, research does suggest that adolescents who watch more movies are more brand conscious and pay more attention to product placements. Likewise, food advertising influences young children's brand preferences and pestering behavior in grocery stores, which in turn may influence dietary choices and future brand preferences. In addition, several studies have found that product placements influence people's choice behavior. If people are going to get a soft drink, they are more likely to choose a particular brand of soft drink if they have seen in a movie than if they have not seen the brand placed in the movie.

—David R. Roskos-Ewoldsen

See also Advertising, Effects on Adolescents of; Advertising, Effects on Children of; Advertising, Health and; Advertising, Purchase Requests and; Eating Habits, Media Influence on; Food Advertising (various entries); Product Placements, Alcohol; Product Placements, Cigarettes

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PROFANITY, TRENDS IN

If all human societies in history share a minimum number of social customs and institutions, the designation of certain words as taboo speech (and the subsequent intentional and contextual use of such speech) clearly qualifies as one such commonality. Because its form is largely dependent on cultural context, cursing—a predominant form of taboo speech—is a concept difficult to define. Generally speaking, cursing is the use of words that audiences are likely to find offensive. What people find to be offensive may, however, depend on their perception of the speaker and the context in which the curse was uttered. The controversy surrounding the increasing use of curse words on American television programs speaks to the delicate nature of this issue. The use of profanity in U.S. television programs is increasing despite implementation of the current television ratings system.

CONTEXT

English-language curses are generally either scatological, sexual, racist, or blasphemous in nature, although exceptions do exist. As with many other types of uttering, swearing is used for a multitude of purposes, including emphasizing certain messages; establishing one's claim to group inclusiveness; reinforcing class, gender, race, and age inequities; relieving tension and achieving catharsis; attacking someone verbally; and eliciting a response from one's audience. Historically, curses have circulated more within the private sphere (e.g., conversations with friends) than the public sphere (e.g., social gatherings, church, and school). With the advent of a pervasive electronic environment (particularly cable TV), however, the curse word has made a strong appearance in the public sphere, as well. The availability of televised profanity to young audiences, in particular, has triggered a nationwide campaign to clean the airwaves of curses. The age- and content-based television ratings system implemented in 1997 was a major step in this direction, but parent groups and many legislators criticize the existing ratings system for its inability to stem the rising wave of profanities uttered on TV.

TRENDS IN THE USE OF PROFANITY

Studies undertaken over the past 30 years have shown an ascending trend in the use of profanities, both in people's everyday conversations and in the television programs they watch. According to the Parents Television Council, the frequency of curses uttered in all media has increased fivefold in the past 10 years. In 2001, Kaye and Sapolsky found that nearly 9 out of 10 prime-time programs contained swear words. Profanity was encountered on both unrated programs and programs rated for "parental guidance," proving that the ratings system is not working as originally intended. Most swearing on TV was done by characters over the age of 21. When under-21 characters did curse, their utterance was either neutral or positive. Another 2001 study indicated that swearing on the airwaves occurred most often in male-to-male interactions, with a tendency to use mild curse words in interactions with the opposite sex.

—Razvan Sibii

See also Adult Mediation of Violence Effects; Aggression, Television and; Arousal Theories; Catharsis Theory; Desensitization Effects; Forbidden Fruit Hypothesis; Gender Roles on Television; Parental Advisory Labels and Rating Systems

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PROMOTIONAL TIE-INS

Promotional tie-ins are a form of marketing promotion in which two or more brands or companies agree to participate in a joint strategy to increase value for both brands regarding exposure or sales, while providing each partner with targeted communication efforts that many times exceed the opportunities provided via traditional advertising alone. Many companies use this as a special form of advertising and marketing to reach the important target audience of children and teenagers, who have become an increasingly powerful consumer segment.

Strategies aimed toward these younger audiences typically involve identifying the most popular characters from children's movies, TV shows, books, and video games and attempting to maximize this popularity via the successful co-merchandising of products that bear the names or images of the characters. This usually occurs as a partnership between an entertainment company and another type of company, which supplies either character-themed merchandise or an entertainment item itself (e.g., a DVD or video game) as a premium to customers who buy its products. Thus, the entertainment company gets the benefit of increased exposure, "hype," or sales, while the co-promoting company gets the benefit of enhanced exposure and an increase in both volume and sales of its own products. Product licensing and promotional tie-ins account for a business that is well over $100 million annually. For example, since the first *Star Wars* movie in 1977, the six films under the name have generated almost $9 billion in merchandise sales and product promotions.

One familiar promotional strategy relating to children typically involves giving away character-themed merchandise (e.g., a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle* action figure) with the purchase of children's meals at a particular fast-food restaurant. The vast range of premium character-themed merchandise goes far beyond just action figures and includes all sorts of specialty products such as hats, T-shirts, watches, posters, cups and glasses, lunch boxes, and sometimes even discounts to the movie being promoted. The implementation of such promotional strategies geared toward children, quite commonplace today, is not a new occurrence in the world of entertainment and marketing. Indeed, the drastic increase in sales of raccoon-tail hats and other similar items propelled by Disney's Davy Crockett TV shows in the 1950s remains one of the most successful promotional tie-in efforts ever.

Because of its prevalence in marketing toward children and adolescents, the fast-food industry typically is the most visible or best-known co-developer of these promotions. McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut, Domino's, and Little Caesar's all have pursued promotional tie-ins for movies such as *Star Wars*, *The Flintstones*, *Rugrats*, *Ghostbusters*, *The Lion King*, *Spider Man*, *Batman Returns*, and so on, as well as for some items somewhat less obvious to adults, such as Nintendo or Sega video games and the Scholastic Goosebumps mystery book. Major players on the entertainment side generally include the major motion picture and TV studios, children's programming companies such as Sesame Workshop or Nickelodeon, and the many other companies involved in producing non-TV and non-movie entertainment for children (e.g., video games, books, music).

However, many promotional tie-in marketing strategies extend beyond simply partnering with a fast-food chain. Packaged food and beverage companies that market to children certainly have shown their interest in this strategy as well, including Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Hershey, Frito-Lay, Kellogg's, and Quaker. The use of the promotional tie-in strategy commonly may go beyond the realm of products geared toward children, as some companies have seen the value of trying to reach the parents of the intended younger target. For example, in a promotional effort that included several children's food products, Walt Disney Pictures' *Aladdin* also partnered with CPC International to include the sale of Hellmann's mayonnaise and Mazola corn oil in the promotion and worked communications company AT&T into the mix. Furthermore, other partnerships have included promotional tie-ins with hotel chains and theme parks/recreation areas.

Because companies spend millions of dollars on promotional tie-in campaigns and continually want to determine the most effective ways to do so, the social questions that typically arise when describing children as a target audience for advertisements also have surfaced in this area as well. While many companies continue to pursue market research to gain insight into the minds and desires of children, media (advertising) critics and some governmental leaders have questioned not only the ethics associated with promotional tie-ins in and of themselves but also the effects that such continuous, deliberate marketing efforts have on younger people.

For example, in addition to examining the possibility of banning food advertising on TV aimed at children and in the midst of criticism of the BBC and Sesame Workshop for recent sponsorship agreements

and promotional tie-ins with McDonald's, the United Kingdom's Food Standards Agency also continually monitors and produces research regarding the effects of food promotions to kids. In the United States, the advocacy group Dove Foundation recently asked Burger King to remove *Star Wars, Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* icons from its kids' meals because the meals were targeted toward the segment of children 4 to 9 years old (which is usual), but the movie was rated PG-13. Also in the United States, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), enforced by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), regulates the content of child-oriented websites regarding promotional tie-in efforts such as sweepstakes and contests, as well as general promotional practices such as data collection and spamming.

—Frank E. Dardis

See also Advertising, Health and; Disney; Electronic Games, Rates of Use of; Electronic Media, Children's Use of; Food Advertising to Children; Media Entertainment; Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Multimedia Toys; Relationship Marketing

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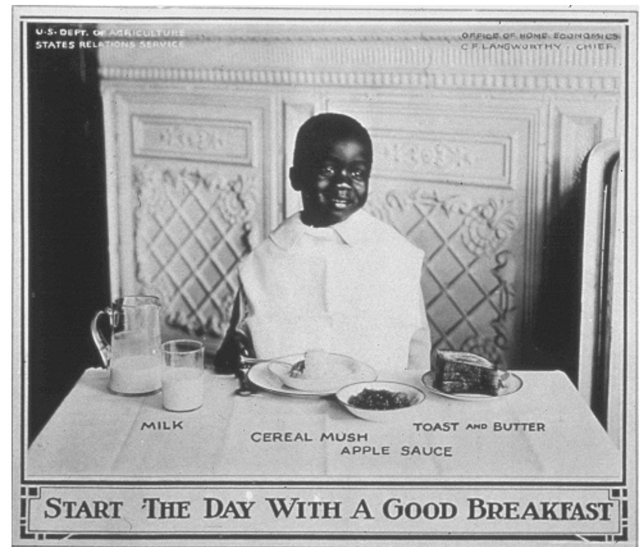
PUBLIC HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

Public health campaigns are developed for a multitude of reasons, and they are implemented in many different ways. They are often created to increase awareness of recently discovered diseases and conditions, such as West Nile virus; to maintain awareness of well-understood health risks, such as AIDS; to impart knowledge about how to avoid various health risks, such as heat stroke; to promote behaviors with healthful benefits, such as quitting smoking or exercising regularly; and to prevent risky behaviors, such as



In 1862, Abraham Lincoln established the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which was elevated to Cabinet level in 1889. The department published its first dietary recommendations in 1894. During the early 20th century, the USDA distributed "food guides" with recommendations on food groups, diets for people of various ages, and appropriate times of day for meals and snacks. During World War II, the department circulated materials on canning and gardening and encouraged Americans to plant "victory gardens." Today, the USDA provides numerous resources with information on nutrition, food preservation, and food safety.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Home Economics (n.d.).

unprotected sex. Public health campaigns often include advertisements placed in mass media such as television and radio, press releases sent to news organizations, informational brochures, and educational programs offered in schools and other community organizations.

Many organizations that produce and disseminate public health campaigns—for instance, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—also include a wealth of information on their websites to support their campaigns. As a result, more recently, mass media campaigns have been created to increase awareness and direct audiences to the Web for further information, much in the same way that campaigns have led audiences to phone in or write to an organization for further information.

In running an effective campaign, the target audience and the issue of concern are crucial and often inseparable. Different campaign strategies are necessary for particular issues and audiences. For example, the anti-littering campaign "Don't mess with Texas"

was enormously successful, with its effectiveness was largely due to strong state pride and regional history. It's unlikely that a similar campaign would do as well in another state. Furthermore, a single audience is likely to respond in different ways to ads placed in different media or to different kinds of appeal (for instance, fear, humor, or straightforward information), and both campaign intent and the way the issue is framed can determine the choice of media and audience-specific strategies. Knowing an audience and an issue also helps in determining the best frequency—how often messages should be disseminated and programmed—because a campaign should include enough ads to make it meaningful and memorable but not so many as to make it overbearing or tedious.

Framing an issue may require a great deal of research, especially when the intent is to cause behavioral change. Because most campaigns attempt to impart knowledge that will change attitudes and, in turn, the audiences' actions, behavioral change is often the main indicator of campaign success, even if the stated goal is simply to raise awareness or change opinions. Communication research raises complex issues about using knowledge and attitudes to influence behaviors, and it provides relevant strategies for imparting information effectively to influence the underlying aspects of behavior.

For instance, social learning theory and protection–motivation theory focus on two components known to predict important decisions—self-efficacy and the advantages of action as opposed to inaction. According to these theories, people must understand that the benefits of taking action outweigh the costs, and they must believe that they are capable of taking the action. The health belief model builds on this by adding that people must also believe they are vulnerable to the costs of inaction. For example, an AIDS campaign based on these theories would state who is at risk (e.g., all who share needles or have unsafe sex), specify their probability of developing the condition, describe the benefits of action and costs of inaction (e.g., life versus death), and convey the ease of taking preventive action (e.g., using new needles or wearing condoms).

Another example is the theory of reasoned action, which focuses on behavioral intent. It says the most important factor in determining behavior is intention to act, which in turn is based on attitudes, beliefs about others' wishes regarding the behavior, and motivation to comply with those wishes. For instance, campaigns designed to decrease littering often express the costs (e.g., dirty environment), benefits (e.g., clean environment), and ease of action (e.g., using a trash can) in an attempt to instill an anti-littering attitude (e.g., littering is dirty, and litterers are lazy), and they also attempt to create a perception of social norms (e.g., most people hold anti-littering attitudes) to encourage the belief that littering will lead to becoming an outcast.

Although vast amounts of theory and research are available regarding the factors that influence public health campaign effectiveness, much of this knowledge goes unused in their creation. For instance, the recent campaign, "Keep Your Body Healthy," from the National Institute on Drug Abuse connects the dangers of using drugs with contracting HIV/AIDS. However, many of the spots, including "Jack and Jill," simply note a possible relationship between drug use and casual sex. This particular public service announcement (PSA) tells a story of two youths having casual sex as a result of taking drugs; one of the two adolescents contracts HIV from the other during intercourse. Never in the spot does it mention the prevalence of HIV among youth, the possibility of contracting HIV from another, the harm HIV can cause, the ease with which one could avoid engaging in casual sex, or the likelihood that drug use leads to casual sex. Moreover, it also fails to mention that condom use can prevent HIV infection. So, all in all, the spot leaves many questions in viewers' minds about the tentative connection between drug use and HIV/AIDS that the ad sets up. Given such a weak argument, many adolescents could likely dispute the ad successfully, and this, in turn, would yield little, if any, influence on their future behaviors.

Beyond reception, memory and decision making are also important. According to the above theories, even though people may be persuaded by a message or set of messages, they need to recall the information learned and apply it in order for the campaign to be successful. In addition, it cannot be assumed that people will always use their knowledge and attitudes in a well-reasoned, logical manner. Because of this, an updated version of the theory of reasoned action, named the theory of planned behavior, includes *perceived behavioral control,* noting that the model only predicts well-thought actions.

Recent anti-smoking campaigns, for instance, rely on viewers to pay strict attention to their ads in order to follow the logic; they also include a very large number of facts designed to persuade youth not to use tobacco. Ads often contain information taken from "big tobacco" marketing plans, and one ad depicts a tobacco company board meeting, framing it as a 1970s-style

sitcom called "Fair Enough," complete with a laugh track. Another spot shows employees following New Yorkers around the city with big, orange arrows and comments such as "Problems with Self-esteem," "Emotionally Insecure," "Probably Leads a Fairly Dull Existence," and "Grooming not a Strong Priority." The spot ends by explaining that the descriptions were taken from the tobacco company's consumer profiles, and the announcer says, "now that's customer appreciation for you." As you can see, the ad not only contains a lot of information but also offers an incredibly complex message. Although creative and attention getting, the ads may not have much impact on adolescent smoking. In particular, many youth don't "plan" to start smoking, but rather pick up the habit at times when they're not looking ahead to the long-term effects.

To explain how decisions are made without much thought, Fazio's MODE model suggests that such choices depend mainly on the strength of a connection between the concept at hand and positivity or negativity. For instance, adolescents' choice whether or not to experiment with illicit drugs, when made without a lot of thought, would depend on whether the concept of drug use immediately brings to mind good or bad thoughts. Recently, researchers have begun to apply Fazio's theory to anti-drug campaigns, and the studies show that ads designed to grab and hold youths' attention are not as effective as those that simply connect drugs with negativity again and again. Although this research is just beginning, initial results imply that traditional attention-getting strategies, for instance, those that say "using drugs supports terrorism," may not be as effective in reducing drug use as more subtle techniques that simply link drugs with negative sentiments.

—Carson B Wagner

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory; Television, Prosocial Content of

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Since the advent of electronic media, there has been a proliferation of public service announcements (PSAs), including campaigns aimed at children and adolescents. However, the notion that mass media can be used for the society's betterment is hardly a recent development. As early as the late 1700s in the United States, print media were used to promote smallpox inoculation, slavery abolition, and women's rights, and in the years since, media have been mobilized to address myriad issues concerning the environment, energy, wildlife, health, international issues such as apartheid and nuclear weaponry, and social issues such as racism, sexism, and abortion. Attempts have taken many forms beyond advertising, from fiction books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to propaganda films and televised entertainment, but due to the persuasive nature of the form, over time, PSAs have become perhaps the most important mass media instrument in social marketing.

The purpose of social marketing is to persuade the public to think, feel, or act in accordance with the goals of the sponsoring agency, be it public or private, and PSAs concern issues both personal and social in nature. Often, when social marketing aims at issues generally supported by the public and policymakers, it is referred to as a *public service campaign*, but when it concerns topics and viewpoints not widely backed, it is labeled an *advocacy strategy*. Regardless of issue or viewpoint popularity, at a larger level, the domain

of PSAs might be best comprehended in terms of social marketers' aims, or rather in what ways PSAs are intended to persuade.

Concerning the foci of influence, it is widely accepted that PSAs center around awareness and knowledge, attitudes and feelings, or behavior and intent, and various contents, forms, and argumentation styles are used to elicit such responses. Although researchers often measure differences in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and affect as a result of PSA consumption, recording behavioral differences is not as easy. This is especially true when the behavior under consideration is far removed from the immediate viewing context, as are many of the behaviors that PSAs attempt to change, such as discouraging illicit drug use and promoting safe sex, a proper diet, or regular check-ups with a physician. As a result, attention is focused on measuring antecedent responses such as knowledge and attitudes, and it is assumed that related behaviors will follow. This theoretical response chain is widely recognized as the knowledge-attitude-behavior hierarchy of effects (K-A-B).

Although the categories of effects are widely agreed upon, classifying the ways in which PSAs attempt to influence cognitions, affect, and instincts or craving is not so clear-cut. Many state that social marketing attempts to make an impact in terms of either promotion or modification. For instance, PSAs can promote ideas and attitudes that help lead adolescents to practice safe sex, or they can be designed to modify existing behaviors such as underage smoking. However, other have argued that we should consider prevention separately from promotion. In other words, promoting engagement—for example, "Remember to brush three times a day!"—and promoting abstinence—for example, "Just say no to drugs!"—are theoretically different strategies; it might be better to term the latter *prevention* as opposed to "promoting abstinence."

This distinction might be better clarified with a discussion of William McGuire's inoculation theory, which says, in short, that PSAs promote knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that will help people avoid succumbing to arguments favoring antisocial behaviors and in turn will help them resist engaging in such activities. Efforts are targeted toward at-risk populations, or those who are likely to encounter situations that favor antisocial behaviors, and the objective is to reach those audiences before they encounter the situation. However, PSAs may inadvertently direct attention toward topics that may otherwise not be a consideration, and in doing so, PSAs run the risk of promoting the antisocial behavior itself, especially if viewers come to disagree with the arguments presented.

For instance, it has been shown that anti-drug PSAs can arouse adolescents' curiosity toward using illicit drugs. As such, even with a prevention focus, PSAs may raise issues among viewers who might otherwise never have thought of them, and in such instances, social marketers may do better to gain a deeper understanding of the issue at hand and promote ideas or activities that would lead audiences in a different direction entirely. An excellent example of a public service campaign influenced by this notion is Freevibe's "What's your anti-drug?", which promotes pastimes such as soccer, skateboarding, computers, drawing, reading, and school. But, because these PSAs frame the question with reference to illicit drugs, they may still pique adolescents' curiosity.

Regardless of a PSA's intent, however, an intimate understanding of the issue and the audience toward whom the ads are targeted is an invaluable tool in producing effective messages. Sufficiently conceptualizing the audience has implications even at the first point of contact, so that a message is not immediately dismissed as irritating, unclear, uninteresting, or lacking in credibility.

An excellent example of a program of research that has systematically studied the confluence of audience and issue regards adolescent sensation seeking and drug use, pioneered by Palmgreen, Donohew, and Harrington (2001). Sensation-seeking levels show a positive correlation with drug-taking risk, and their research has demonstrated that it is better to target high-sensation-seeking youths by provocatively stressing the dangers of drugs in high-sensation media outlets and programming. On the other hand, for low-level sensation seekers, it is better to focus on peer resistance and coping skills in a more serious manner and to insert the PSAs into less sensational programming. In sum, it is best to match as closely as possible the PSA and the context in which it is shown with various audience types, and this strategy also helps to avoid unintentionally introducing audiences to issues they may not (yet) be facing.

—Carson B Wagner

See also Public Health Campaigns

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FreeVibe: www.whatsyourantidrug.com

PUBLIC TELEVISION

See Educational Television, Programming in; Sesame Workshop

PURCHASE INFLUENCE ATTEMPTS

Children have an important influence on a variety of purchasing decisions, with respect to both child-related purchases such as toys, snacks, or sweets and everyday household purchases such as breakfast products and desserts. As children grow older, they even gain a say in their parents' choice of restaurants, holiday destinations, or cars.

Children seem to exert influence on their parents in two ways: direct and indirect. Children exert direct influence when they actively ask for or demand a product. Indirect (or passive) influence is the situation in which parents take account of the wants and preferences of their children when shopping. Many parents have a list in their head of the favorite brands of children, which they take into account when shopping. Research on children's purchase influence attempts has predominantly focused on the development and the consequences of children's purchase request behavior.

DEVELOPMENT OF PURCHASE INFLUENCE ATTEMPTS

From the moment of birth, children have particular preferences for tastes, colors, and sounds and communicate their wants and preferences to their parents. However, the initial expression of wants and preferences is primarily reactive: The child indicates when the stimulus offered is pleasant or unpleasant.

Once children reach 2 years of age, they begin to express their wants and preferences more actively. During this period, children discover that they have their own will and begin to experiment with it. Children now begin to ask for products that they like, especially when the products are in their immediate vicinity, for example, in a store or on television. During early childhood, the frequency of children's purchase influence attempts steadily increases, then starts to decrease again when children reach about 7 years of age. Around this age, children begin to make purchases independently, and they tend to exert more indirect or passive influence on their parents than younger children do.

Purchase Influence Style

As children mature, they display a growing ability to apply sophisticated influence techniques. Very young children quite often ask for products—and whine as well as show anger to persuade their parents to provide them. In contrast, older children tend to use more sophisticated persuasion techniques, such as negotiation, argumentation, soft-soaping, arousing sympathy, and even white lies. In addition, boys are generally more persistent in their requests for advertised products than girls are. They more often rely on forceful or demanding strategies when trying to

persuade their parents, whereas girls are more likely to rely on tact and polite suggestions.

Types of Products Requested

In general, children ask for products that they consume themselves or in which they have a special interest, such as toys or products that come with a premium. The types of requests that children make to their parents change as they get older. Up to the age of 3 years old, children ask mainly for food, whereas 3-to-5-year-olds also start to ask for toys. Children up to the age of 7 or so primarily ask for candies, toys, and snacks. At about 9 years of age, children begin to ask for useful products, such as clothes, school stationery, and sport items. Finally, adolescents tend to ask for products with a social function, such as clothing and music equipment.

CONSEQUENCES OF CHILDREN'S PURCHASE INFLUENCE ATTEMPTS

The consequences of children's purchase influence attempts can generally be divided into intended and unintended consequences. Intended consequences include children's influence on family purchases—in other words, the extent to which children's requests result in actual purchase by the parent. Unintended consequences include the extent to which children's purchase influence attempts result in conflicts between parents and children.

Influence on Family Purchases

The influence of children on family purchasing has been increasing steadily since the 1970s, but since the 1980s it has grown dramatically. Children's increased influence on family purchases can be explained by various sociological changes over the past decades. Parents have higher incomes and better educational levels. In addition, they have fewer children and have them at a later age. There are more divorced parents, single-parent families, and families in which both parents work. These factors all contribute to the tendency for parents to indulge their children's wishes more often, to feel guilty more often, and to do what they can to ensure that their children want for nothing.

It has been estimated that children influence about one third of family purchases. However, a number of factors have been identified that interact with parental yielding to children's purchase influence attempts. First, research has demonstrated that children exert the greatest influence on products that they will use, including toys, clothes, and candies, or that they will enjoy, such as theme parks. Second, various studies have shown that parents yield to older children's request more often than to younger children's requests. Finally, children from families with a high income and from single-parent families tend to have more influence on family purchases.

Parent-Child Conflict

Children can be very persistent when asking for something. This can sometimes lead to conflicts between parents and children, for example, when they are in a supermarket or a toy store. Such parent-child conflicts have been shown to occur more frequently with younger than with older children. A first explanation is that younger children more often have difficulty delaying gratification than older children have. If young children see something as attractive, they focus all their attention on the enticing aspects of this stimulus and find it difficult to resist, which may increase the chance of parent-child conflict.

Second, the decrease in parent-child conflict as a result of influence attempts may be a result of children's growing ability to apply sophisticated persuasion techniques. As described above, young children quite often ask, whine, and show anger to persuade their parents. Older children, in contrast, tend to use more sophisticated persuasion techniques, such as negotiation, flattery, and white lies. Such sophisticated persuasion strategies generally lead to less parent-child conflict than the persuasion strategies of younger children do.

—Moniek Buijzen and Patti M. Valkenburg

See Also Adult Mediation of Advertising Effects; Advertising, Effects on Children of; Advertising, Intended vs. Unintended Effects of; Advertising, Parent-Child Conflict and; Advertising, Regulation of; Food Advertising to Children; Obesity

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R

RADIO, HISTORY OF

Since the 1920s, children and adolescents have enjoyed tuning into radio. Over the years, they have listened to a wide range of programs, from radio versions of their favorite comic books to disc jockeys spinning popular Top 40 tunes. The radio industry has continually created content with children and adolescents in mind. Radio has been used as a means both to educate this age group and to advertise to this lucrative demographic. Radio programming for children and adolescents can be divided into two distinct periods: the golden age of radio before the arrival of television and radio after the emergence of TV.

RADIO'S GOLDEN AGE

Although experimentation with radio technology dates back to the 19th century, the medium was not used as a means of broadcasting content to a mass audience until the early 1920s. Over the next two decades, the radio audience grew rapidly, reaching a majority of U.S. homes by the mid-1930s. During this period, a number of innovations were introduced, including the creation of national radio networks and the adoption of advertising as the industry's main source of revenue. By the mid-1930s, radio was the most popular mass medium, simultaneously entertaining millions of households throughout the United States.

During radio's golden age, a period stretching roughly from the early 1930s to the mid-1940s, listeners had access to a wide range of programming content. A radio station's daily broadcast often featured a variety of 15-minute programs, including vaudeville-inspired comedy and variety shows, dramas and plays, daytime and evening serials, quiz and trivia shows, news and educational programs, and musical performances.

Through this period, many radio stations and networks offered programs targeted specifically at children. These shows, aired during the hours after school and on weekends, were popular with children. Reacting to children's desire to hear stories rather than music, the radio networks often created serial programs, ending each episode with a cliffhanger designed to bring the listener back to the next episode. Many popular programs, for example, *Little Orphan Annie*, *Captain Midnight*, and *Superman,* were based on comic books, a medium already popular with children. Other program formats popular with children at the time include comedies, mysteries, and plays.

Along with shows created especially for them, children enjoyed listening to programs created for adult audiences. Adult programs like *Myrt and Marge*, *Eno Crime Clues*, and *Rudy Vallee* were as popular with children as programs designed specifically for the age group. In the end, it appears as though the time of day a program was aired was more important for children's listening habits than the audience the producers intended to target.

During the golden age of radio, programs were created with funds from a national radio network or from a corporate sponsor. Shows containing no advertisements were considered sustaining programs and were created by radio networks to fill the radio day, while sponsored programs were funded with advertising dollars. Corporations hoping to advertise their products to children and their parents often sponsored

children's programs during this time period. Programs advertised a wide range of products including food items and household goods. For instance, *Tarzan* promoted a chocolate milk beverage and *Fu Manchu* advertised a hand lotion.

RADIO AFTER TELEVISION

With the advent of television, radio underwent an identity crisis. Popular programs, such as *The Lone Ranger* and *The Life of Riley*, jumped from radio to television, leaving radio to find new content to fill the airwaves. Faced with the need to adapt or die, the industry shifted from comedies and dramas to a format system largely dominated by music. Replacing actors with disk jockeys, radio stations began specializing in genre music and experimenting with nonmusical formats such as talk radio and news programming. Children and adolescents embraced the change, particularly radio's focus on different styles of music. In the 1950s, teenagers were drawn in large numbers to rock and roll, and radio gave them what they wanted. Over the decades since, children and adolescents have continued to tune into to a wide range of music from Top 40 to country to rap.

In the 1990s, several stations and networks designed specifically for children emerged on the radio scene. Across the country, several cities introduced stations devoted solely to children, while Fox Broadcasting introduced a syndicated radio program. On a national level, several networks were launched, including Children's Media Network's Kid Star and Children's Broadcasting Corporation's Radio AAHS. By the end of the decade, both networks had failed, but a third children's network, ABC's Radio Disney, remained successful. Started in 1996, Radio Disney targets children between the ages of 2 and 11 years with a mix of pop music and songs from movie soundtracks. It also incorporates news and safety tips into the 24-hour programming feed.

Although the majority of young radio listeners today are tuning into music, they also listen to talk radio and educational programs. Adolescents are also taking an active role in the creation of radio shows. National Public Radio regularly features segments created by adolescents, including *Teenage Diaries* and news segments provided by Youth Radio, which also offers program content to a network of radio stations and distributes shows through the Internet.

Eighty years after it was first introduced, broadcast radio still captures the attention of children and adolescents. Once a medium that entertained young listeners with dramatic and comedic programs, today it offers young listeners a world of music and information.

—Charlene Simmons

See also Radio, International

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RADIO, INTERNATIONAL

Within today's media landscape, radio is regarded as a rather old medium. It has made its way into the people's everyday lives almost everywhere in the world. According to the latest edition of the UNESCO *Statistical Yearbook,* in 1999 an estimated 2.4 billion radio receivers were in use throughout the world. On average, there were 418 radio receivers for every 1,000 people, with clear differences between developing countries (245 radio receivers per 1,000 inhabitants) and industrialized countries (1,061 per 1,000 inhabitants).

Due to different political, economic, and cultural conditions, radio systems differ substantially among countries. At the same time, some common trends can be observed on the international level. One of these trends is that listening to the radio has become a secondary activity that engages listeners throughout the day; in the evening, when most people start to watch television, radio's reach goes down. Another trend, closely connected to the first one, is that music has become the core content of radio. Finally, most radio channels are formatted along strict principles that fix

the distribution of word and music, the style of music, the way to address the listeners, and so on. The overall strategy is to provide reliable companionship throughout the day. There are different formats, mainly music dominated (e.g., AC or Adult Contemporary; CHR or Contemporary Hit Radio), but also including dedicated talk radio or culture-oriented channels.

With respect to the organization of radio, most countries have developed dual radio systems including a more or less balanced combination of public service broadcasters (funded by fees, taxes, donations, or advertising) and private broadcasters, including both commercial and noncommercial stations. Commercial radio is funded mainly by advertising revenues and thus follows the strategy of serving as a convenient companion throughout the day. Noncommercial radio includes a wide range of more or less institutionalized stations that are run for idealistic reasons, with the subcategory of so-called community radios being a particularly important part of many countries' radio landscape.

Compared to television, radio is easy to handle on the production side as well as on the recipient's side. Therefore, this medium is ideal for local and regional communication, for the community sector, and for nonprofit initiatives seeking expression on a public forum. Radio is still particularly important as a means of communication and education in developing countries. For example, in Africa, radio is regarded as the most valued, most credible, and most important news medium. More than 90% of the African population listens to the radio. This is due to several reasons. First, radio is highly compatible with the oral cultures in Africa. In providing local music and local language, radio supports identity formation and integration. Furthermore, unlike press media, it requires neither literacy on the part of listeners nor costly distribution systems on the part of broadcasters.

However, radio is not exclusively the medium of the neighborhood. Radio is also a highly international medium. After a long history in which international radio was used as a means of political influence, especially during World War II and the Cold War, today, many countries offer an international service distributed via shortwave or via satellite. Examples include BBC World Service, Radio France International (RFI), Radio Televisao Portuguesa Internacional (RTP), Deutsche Welle, and Voice of America. Such international radio broadcasts have often been—and still are—particularly important whenever dictatorial regimes try to restrict national media diversity. In these situations, national media lose credibility, and radio listeners look for independent information from alternative sources.

The BBC World Service is one of the most renowned international radio stations. It offers programming in 33 languages throughout the world. Although paid for by the British government, its programming is politically independent. News programs of BBC World Service are regularly rebroadcast by regional stations. In many countries, BBC World Service is the only news medium trusted by the population to be outside government influence. Beyond news, a broad range of education, entertainment, and sports is offered.

In the last decade, radio has been considerably affected by the advent and fast diffusion of the Internet, with the two media developing a close coalition. Via the Internet, people in any country of the world can listen to radio stations from any other country in the world, including general channels, thematic channels, Internet-only stations, and traditional stations that distribute their programs simultaneously via the Internet. Radio via the Internet can be produced and distributed for quite low cost and is available globally. However, not all people in all parts of the world enjoy the obligatory prerequisites for listening to this kind of radio—computer and Internet access. So far, even in industrialized countries, the use of Internet radio is quite low. In Germany, only 6% of the users of online media said they listen to Internet radio at least once a week.

There are a variety of initiatives regarding children's programming at both the international and national levels. The World Radio Forum (WRF) encourages partnerships between organizations and private companies to develop radio for, by, and with young people. The WRF champions child rights and aims to articulate values important for children and their communities. It has launched the Radio Manifesto, which defines children's needs and priorities with regard to radio, provides an international forum for those lobbying for children's and youth programming, and outlines standards for appropriate child-centered and youth-based programs.

Within the framework of the overall principle of "media activities and good ideas from, with, and for children," UNICEF tries to increase children's interest in their peers in other countries and to overcome barriers between cultures. As one part of its activities, a UNICEF radio service for children has been founded. The programming focuses on children's rights. The

overall range of topics is broad; for example, on February 24, 2006, there were items on AIDS, violence against children, and camel riding in Pakistan, as well as the diary of a girl living in Iraq.

BBC's Afghan Education Project (AEP) has developed Radio Education for Afghan Children (REACH) to help address the educational needs of Afghan children ages 6 to 16 years who have missed most or all of their schooling. It is hoped that, by listening to the weekly radio programs at home, children will be exposed to Afghanistan's traditions, culture, and history, as well as receiving information about present-day concerns such as mine awareness and health education.

On the national level, some Internet-based initiatives try to promote the idea and availability of children's radio. For example, the *Radio4kids* website in the United Kingdom sets out "to thoroughly review and monitor the provision of radio offered to children in the UK." The core aims of this initiative include to promote the concept and idea of radio being produced by children for children, to campaign for the eventual setting up of a national radio station that showcases young people's work, and to provide guidance and training to teachers and others involved with children to help produce, edit, and submit material to potential broadcasters.

—Uwe Hasebrink

See also British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); Media Effects; Radio, History of; Radio, Listeners' Age and Use of

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World Radio Forum: http://www.worldradioforum.org/index.shtml

RADIO, LISTENERS' AGE AND USE OF

Research on radio uses deals with what listeners seek from radio stations and what these listeners receive in return. Age is one important factor in how people use radio, with children using radio more frequently as they get older, especially for listening to music. The study of radio use (as contrasted with radio effects) assumes the ultimate power of the listener and falls under the umbrella of the conditional effects of the media. In particular, uses and gratifications theory looks at what people do with media, rather than what the media do to people.

Uses and gratifications theory was first developed in the early 1940s by such researchers as Herta Herzog and Paul Lazarsfeld (http://www.britannica.com/bcom/eb/article/6/0,5716,48556+1+47446,00.html?query=lazarsfeld%20paul) as they studied radio listeners. It was an early response to research on the direct effects of media, which assumed that all media had powerful and uniform effects.

A 1951 study showed that children had different uses for adventure stories based on their integration into groups of peers. Those in peer groups used the stories as a source of games, while those outside of peer groups used the stories for fantasies. The researcher concluded that different people can use the same communication message for very different purposes. Contemporary theorists such as Alan Rubin have isolated two categories of motives for media use: instrumental (learning, social) versus ritual (escape, habit, relaxation).

About the same time, another study looked at the listening habits of the young radio audience at a time when serialized dramas for children were still available on network radio. In the 1950s, however, very young audiences were beginning to discover television (e.g., *Howdy Doody, Captain Kangaroo*). While the youngsters may have left radio for TV, their adolescent brothers and sisters were drawn to radio, where they could hear rock and roll music and performers such as Elvis Presley.

Since the advent of television in the 1950s, radio has become of less interest to children, so research has focused more on television, especially on its potential for harming children. Television attracts all categories of young people and provides them with the widest range of satisfactions. Even proprietary media research (e.g., by media research companies such as Arbitron and Nielsen) regularly reports radio listening data only for children ages 12 and older, typically because advertisers assume younger children gravitate to television. Children age 2 years and older are counted as television viewers.

Music is the only other medium that ranks close to television, particularly for adolescents, because it can be both the focus of attention and a background medium, has both social and individual uses, and suits a diversity of moods. Radio competes with recorded music, and its use has declined as technology creates alternative delivery systems. In recent years, adolescents have shown much greater interest in recorded audio media and other digital personal media (e.g., iPODs, other MP3 players) that allow music to be downloaded and stored rather than accessed via live broadcasts.

Academic research on radio is somewhat limited in recent years because of attention to television and the Internet, although concern about music lyrics produced notable work in the 1980s and early 1990s. Peter Christenson found age correlates with the amount of radio listening and whether or not listening is done alone or with others. His work confirms earlier research that found a key difference between television and radio with regard to youth: Young people tend to use music and radio to get away from parents, possibly because parents are more willing to permit the unsupervised use of these media than of television. Parents who ban computers and television from bedrooms do not often forbid radio listening. Christenson founds that benefits of radio listening (e.g., music, information, distraction, background noise) do not differ by age or gender. He also confirmed 1972 reports that about a third of sixth graders listen to radio 2 or more hours per day. By the third grade, 80% of children have a favorite station, up from 50% at the previous grade level. He concluded that preteens are "eavesdropping" on the teen world via radio and recorded music, causing occasional concern to parents. In the 1980s, research explored the public policy implications of music lyrics at a time of heightened interest before the labeling of CDs. One study found that African American children consumed 25% more radio than white peers, twice the 12% difference between the groups' television use.

Specialized research is still important to the radio industry. A recent Arbitron survey found that about 90% of 6-to-11-year-olds tuned into their favorite radio stations 8 to 9 hours each week. Many children develop surprising loyalty to stations and formats. The Arbitron study showed just how important the preteen market is to advertisers. A subsequent study made phone calls to parents and kids who had completed listening diaries from the first survey. The study revealed that children have very distinct listening and format preferences that can be targeted to deliver specific messages. In Los Angeles, for example, 67% of girls ages 6 to 11 years preferred a Top 40 station, whereas 71% of the boys in the same age range preferred a rhythmic contemporary hits radio (CHR) station.

Arbitron's study found that in households with young children, listening to the radio is still a family activity after school. The most likely locale for tuning in to a child's favorite station is the family car, where 85% most often listen to the radio. According to the study findings, children chose the radio station either all of the time (34%) or some of the time (38%). The study showed that kids like radio commercials and are receptive to radio ads that are fun and informative. They are also likely to respond to the products and services being advertised and frequently ask their parents to make purchases on their behalf.

—Douglas A. Ferguson

See also Bedrooms, Media Use in; Radio, History of

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RATING SYSTEMS, PARENTAL USE OF

Most electronic media industries employ a rating system to identify content that parents might find

objectionable for children. Ratings systems usually include a set of symbols that identify age levels for which content might be appropriate; many also include letters or phrases that identify the specific type of mature content. The ostensible purpose of these systems is to allow parents to gauge media content without having to prescreen it. At the same time, creation of these ratings systems builds some goodwill for media industries with their audiences, advocacy groups, and government regulators.

Parents' use of media ratings systems has, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation, been relatively stable. About half of all parents in their surveys say they have used those ratings, but only one quarter reported using them frequently to guide children's viewing choices. Kaiser's surveys have also reported similar rates of adoption for video game ratings and the advisory stickers used to label explicit content in recorded music. However, the adoption rate for movie ratings remains higher; about three quarters of parents report using movie ratings. This might be due to the fact that the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) film ratings have been available longer (since 1968). Two generations of parents have grown up with and understand these ratings.

Effective use of any media ratings system depends on parents knowing their meaning. This has been less of a challenge with older ratings systems like the MPAA ratings. More recently developed systems, such as the television ratings adopted in 1997, fostered some confusion among parents. National surveys conducted in the first 3 years of that rating system found that although a majority of parents said they were aware of the ratings, many could not accurately identify the meaning of all the symbols. Follow-up studies conducted in the early 2000s showed that about half of parents were at least fairly well informed about the ratings symbols' meanings. However, one study conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center found that children were more aware and knowledgeable about the ratings than were their parents. To date, there are no available studies that test parents' knowledge of other media ratings systems.

Perhaps a larger question, however, concerns parents' knowledge of less visible ratings, such as those used for Internet content. The system developed by the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA) is currently the most widely used. These ratings are designed to be used by Internet browsers as a filter on downloaded content. Widely used browsers, such as Internet Explorer and Netscape, allow users to set filtering levels by changing the browser's internal settings. Brief words or phrases are used to describe the various filtering levels for sex, nudity, violence, and language. For example, Internet Explorer's options for nudity range from "no nudity" to "provocative frontal nudity." Some phrases are accompanied by a brief description or example, but the majority are not. Parents who wish to actively use these ratings must learn how to set the browser's settings and visit the ICRA's website for information about them. To date, no published study has presented data about whether parents do this or simply accept the browser's default settings (meaning the filter is off).

Uncertainty about a medium's rating system has obvious implications for its use. Focus group studies conducted by researchers at Michigan State University and the University of Pennsylvania confirmed parents' confusion over the television ratings system. Some, for example, thought that the TV-Y7 rating meant that the show was intended for children 7 years and younger; others believed that the show should be viewed only by children older than 7 years. Furthermore, many of those parents interviewed expressed disagreement with the standards used to assign ratings to television shows. A study by David A. Walsh and Douglas Gentile, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, documented this disagreement. Those researchers assembled panels of parents who were asked to rate television shows, movies, and other content. Each was asked if the content would be suitable for toddlers, children, and teens. While the parent panels agreed with the industry ratings in a majority of cases, many instances of disagreement were noted, with the parents rejecting material that media producers and film raters had approved for children.

Parents who are confused or disagree with a ratings system must evaluate content on their own. This judgment might be made after prescreening the material in question, but this is seldom possible given the thousands of movie, television, and recording titles targeted toward young audiences each year (not to mention the vast number of websites accessible to children). Two factors might guide parents' choice of ratings use or reliance on their own media knowledge. The first is parents' existing attitudes about a medium's potential harmful effects on children. The more a parent believes television can encourage bad behavior, for instance, the more television ratings might be used to restrict children's viewing. This is also the case for the second

factor, parents' current level of media supervision. Two studies found that ratings were more likely to be used by parents who already restricted children's viewing. Both reasoned that those parents might be using ratings to confirm their intuitive judgment about content. Hence, ratings systems (no matter how simple or convenient) do not seem to encourage new viewing restrictions from parents.

—Ron Warren

See also Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA); Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of

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RAVES

Originating in Europe during the 1980s, raves became popular in major coastal American cities during the early 1990s, subsequently spreading to other metropolitan areas. The participation of youth in these events transcends the boundaries of any one nation.

In the beginning, typical raves were late-night dance parties that featured electronic music, occurring in rented or "borrowed" settings. The music was a mixture of digitally created sounds and previously recorded music. Distinct genres included house, jungle, trance, techno, breakbeat, hardcore, and downtempo. Disc jockeys (DJs) spun music, compiling their own unique show, which featured a combination of music, sounds, beats, and lights to create an entire setting for an intense and unique dance scene. DJs attracted a following like any other musical performer, and their artistic styles were promoted by organizers who book events at different venues and nightclubs.

Use of drugs, particularly ecstasy and other "club drugs," became associated with these events, and a variety of drug-related paraphernalia (e.g., pacifiers, lollipops, and glow sticks) emerged in these settings. Although the prevalence and type of drug use was not well measured at early events, the popular view was that this was a social setting where drug use was prevalent and accepted. Incidents of drug-related overdoses were featured on the front pages of major newspapers, and a few deaths brought a public outcry for action by authorities. In addition, other medical concerns—overheated venues, lack of sufficient hydration following vigorous physical exercise associated with dancing, and the availability of illegal substances of unknown content—resulted in the emergence of safety networks formed by young people themselves. One such network is DanceSafe, a U.S. and Canadian national coalition of organizations in which volunteers promote health and safety among partygoers. In addition, this coalition addresses questions about drugs, pill testing, drug use, and safety of individuals, as well as informing consumers about various legal actions being taken across the United States relating to these events.

Gradually, the original ad hoc rave scene gave way to electronic music dance events (EMDEs) offered in established nightclubs. Although nightclubs provided a more business-oriented setting, the association with drug use on premises continued. In 2003, the U.S. Senate passed the Illicit Drug Anti-Proliferation Act (also known as the Rave Act), which specifically prohibits an individual from "knowingly opening, maintaining, managing, controlling, renting, leasing, making available for use, or profiting from any place for the purpose of manufacturing, distributing, or using any controlled substance, and for other purposes." Thus, businesses are under increasing pressure to control their environments and to eliminate drug use on premises. However, little attention has been given to how this might be accomplished.

Attendees at EMDEs are generally young (ages 18 to 25), ethnically diverse, and of both genders. Especially important, these events attract both college students and young working people, thus providing a social setting with an interface between classes. Events are sometimes advertised to attract specialized populations such as gay/lesbian events or special theme

nights (e.g., 80's night or holiday parties). Advertising for the events occurs in newspapers, over the Internet, through flyers, and sometimes via word of mouth.

The amount of illicit drug use that occurs at EMDEs has been investigated in few scientific studies. These studies tend to provide more knowledge about recent history of drug use among attendees than about drug use on premises. Recent research from a small set of events suggests that the attendees use drugs prior to the event and that very few attendees convert from no drug use to drug use on the premises (based on biological assays and self-reports). Nonetheless, this research suggests that the proportion of attendees who leave the EMDEs and are positive for drug use is high for many events. There is considerable variation in the proportion across different types of events, however.

In the past, raves were particularly associated with the use of ecstasy. However, the overall rates of ecstasy use in the general population have declined since 2003, and the proportion of attendees of club events who are found positive for ecstasy use has been under 10% in recent studies (compared to 30% in studies prior to 2003). Other forms of amphetamines remain popular at these events (e.g., methamphetamine, speed, and crystal meth). In addition, alcohol is commonly used by attendees of EMDEs and is served at most of the events.

A number of risky behaviors associated with EMDEs are of concern from a public health standpoint. Although drug overdoses are not common, they can occur. An environmental mix of drug use, overheated venues, and lack of hydration, coupled with the physical exertion of dancing, can create health problems. Other social and behavioral risks associated with drug use include sexual risk taking, violence, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In addition, risks of legal consequences for drug sales or possession are also of concern.

To date, prevention efforts have focused on providing information to individuals through volunteer organizations. Laws have been used to pressure businesses to police and enforce a no-drugs policy on premises. However, many club drugs come in pill form, and these drugs are easy to conceal and to consume. Finally, it is not clear what characteristics of events (e.g., genre of music being played, type of venue) and attendees (e.g., age, gender, educational or occupational status) are associated with increased risk of drug use and subsequent harmful outcomes. These emerging findings suggest that more deliberate investigation of this environment is needed to clarify both the need for preventive interventions and possible targets for these interventions.

—Brenda A. Miller and Debra Furr-Holden

See also Anti-Drug Media Campaigns; Music Genres, Dance/House/Techno; Music Genres, Heavy Metal

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READING, HISTORY OF

Insofar as it is defined as the ability to make sense of certain patterns of signs, the activity of reading has always been a hallmark of human life. Modern scientists interpret the human-made notches found on unearthed prehistoric bones as ample proof of the early human's ability to and inclination toward inscribing meaning onto objects, thus conserving that object for later appraisals. The phenomenon of reading is intimately connected to that of writing, and the histories of the two modes of communication are intertwined. In its early stages, reading was always done aloud, and the transition to silent reading did not occur until the 7th century AD. Early efforts at teaching children to read used texts written for adults, and not until the 18th century was there a significant amount of literature specifically for children.

Table 1 International Literacy Rates, 2002

Country	*Adult Literacy Rate (males)*	*Adult Literacy Rate (females)*	*Youth Literacy Rate (males)*	*Youth Literacy Rate (females)*
Albania	99 percent	98 percent	99 percent	99 percent
Bangladesh	50	31	58	41
Brazil	86	87	93	96
Burundi	58	44	67	65
Cambodia	81	59	85	76
China	95	87	99	99
Ecuador	92	90	96	96
Ghana	82	66	94	90
India	68	45	80	65
Indonesia	92	83	99	98
Iran, Islamic Rep.	84	70	96	92
Israel	97	93	100	99
Latvia	100	100	100	100
Portugal	95	91	100	100
Romania	98	96	98	98
Russian Federation	100	99	100	100
South Africa	87	85	92	92
Spain	99	97	100	100
Syrian Arab Republic	91	74	97	93

SOURCE: Data from World Bank, *Economic Outcomes: 2005 World Development Indicators*. Retrieved from http://devdata.worldbank.org/eoutcomes.pdf

NOTE: The World Development Indicators database, from which these figures are taken, does not contain relevant data about the United States. According to the *CIA World Fact Book*, in 1999, 97% of the U.S. population could read and write. Data available at: http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/us.html

However, beginning with the second half of the 20th century, children's literature became big business, with writers such as J. K. Rowling (author of the *Harry Potter* books) enjoying impressive financial gains from the selling of their books, toy branding rights, and movie copyrights.

DEFINITION AND EARLY HISTORY

Reading can be defined as the activity of assigning meaning to abstract signs created by a human being through the undertaking of writing. One could trace the beginnings of writing (and therefore of reading as well) to about 4000 BC, when the activity of Sumerian scribes underwent a major change. Prior to that time, abstract signs (e.g., the crude drawing of a house) were understood by virtue of their visual similarity to the object they represented. After 4000 BC, people began to interpret a sign by virtue of the standardized sound associated with it. One was now reading a language, rather than deciphering a series of graphical representations of objects. Reading, at this point, was done exclusively aloud. The responsibilities of a scribe included recording commercial agreements, speeches, and royal proclamations, as well as reciting such recordings when prompted. Reading was speaking with the aid of a written text.

CONTINUOUS WRITING AND THE TENDENCY TO READ ALOUD

The ancient Sumerian, Phoenician, and Hebrew scribes did not use vowels in their writings, but they separated individual words using punctuation and spaces. Working with an alphabet developed by the Phoenicians, the Greeks changed both of these conventions, inserting vowels in the text, but dropping the separation. Also picked up by the Romans in the second century, this unbroken kind of writing became known as *scriptura continua.* Contemporary studies of language

and reading (both ethnographical and clinical) show that continuous writing requires more cognitive work on the part of the reader than broken text does. Coupled with investigations into children's ability to read silently, these studies point to a strong connection between the manner in which writing is organized and displayed and the manner in which people read the text. Children have thus been found to be partial to using scriptura continua, as this kind of writing closely resembles the oral speech to which they are already accustomed. The lack of word separation, however, prevents them from quickly acquiring the ability to recognize a word by merely glancing at it, without initially adding individual letter-sounds. Because of such difficulties, children who are learning to read will do so aloud—a maneuver that allows them the luxury of hearing language, in addition to seeing it on paper.

WORD SEPARATION AND THE ABILITY TO READ SILENTLY

The seventh century AD saw the reintroduction of word separation in Indo-European languages, initially undertaken by Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes. For the next 10 centuries, discontinuous writing spread throughout the rest of Europe. At this historical juncture, the activity of reading aloud slowly began to give way to silent reading. Scriptura continua had made it necessary for the readers' eyes to wander along the text ahead of their voice so they could identify "readable" units of language. The spaces between words, however, afforded readers more flexibility in terms of eye movement across the pages. Quickly jumping from word to word was now possible, and the advantage of hearing your own reading aloud diminished in importance. Today, the structure of the written language continues to influence the manner in which reading was undertaken, even though similar languages with different scripts do exist and are often mutually comprehensible.

TEACHING CHILDREN

Although most human societies in history gave much thought to educating their youth, the manner in which this process was conceived of differed widely. Ancient cultures such as the Romans, the Greeks, and the Hebrews tended to focus their educational efforts on preparing children to become worthy members of a specific community (political, military, or religious in nature). Most educational materials, therefore, were not designed specifically for children but, rather, for a general citizenry. When people began to formally teach children in sixth-century Britain, Christian monks used primarily religious texts written for an adult audience. For entertainment purposes, children read historical narratives and fables (e.g., the *Iliad, Aesop's Fables*). During the 15th and 16th centuries, the rise of a Western European middle class brought about an increased interest in juvenile education, and lesson books specifically prepared for children began to appear.

EARLY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

It was only after the widespread translation and publication of Charles Perrault's 1698 collection of fairy tales, however, that a genuine "children's literature" came into being in Europe. Perrault's stories—Sleeping Beauty, Puss in Boots, Little Red Riding Hood, and Cinderella, along with others that would become famous around the world—were arguably the first texts written primarily for the entertainment of children (and not for their instruction). For 50 years, however, such fairy tales barely trickled into Europe's countries, and the vast majority of children had no access to them. That situation began to change in 1744, when John Newbery opened a press and a bookstore in London specifically meant to cater to children's literary needs. The widely popular products of Newbery's enterprises (e.g., the *Little Pretty Pocket Book*) were followed, at the beginning of the 19th century, by the publication of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales and, in 1845, by the translation in English of stories by Hans Christian Andersen, to this day the most popular children's writer. The rest of the century witnessed an explosion of children's literature, spurred by the work of such authors as Lewis Carroll (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* 1865), Frank Baum (*The Wizard of Oz,* 1900), Robert L. Stevenson (*Treasure Island,* 1883), and Mark Twain (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,* 1876, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* 1884).

LITERACY RATES

The Puritan culture of colonial America stressed the importance of education as a way of acquiring necessary knowledge, such as the ability to read the Bible. The widespread informal teaching sessions conducted by New England women in their houses, and the subsequent establishment of formal educational institutions,

accounted for higher rates of literacy in the New World than in Europe. Due to historical disagreements about the definition of literacy, as well as the dearth of statistical data, little information exists on the exact literacy levels of pre-19th-century America. Existing estimates are based on analyses of signatures on old documents, a method that accounts for the lack of data on early children's, women's, or minority's literacy rates. By 1650, it is thought that 60% of white, male Americans were able to read. In 1840, the U.S. census included a question about illiteracy, but the resulting data suffer from the bias of self-reporting. In 1979, only 0.6% of the U.S. population was reported to be illiterate, which accounted for just under 1 million people. According to the United Nations, in 2003, the United States was ranked 10th in the world in terms of literacy rates.

In 2000, at the U.N. Millennium Summit, the world's countries agreed to make efforts to achieve universal primary education by 2015. At the time of that decision, according to World Bank estimates, 115 million children (62 million of whom were girls) did not benefit from any type of formal education. Almost half of those children lived in sub-Saharan Africa. The 2015 target has been widely criticized, and politicians and public policy specialists doubt that it can be achieved.

—Razvan Sibii

See also Books for Children; Cognitive Script Theory; Digital Literacy; Literacy; Reading, Literacy and; Reading, Patterns of

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READING, IMPACT OF TV ON

Since television's emergence as a mass medium, there has been a concern that it would affect reading among children, and since the early 1950s, a considerable body of research has addressed the issue. However, from the beginning, there has been little agreement among researchers as to the strength, direction, or even the existence of such a relationship.

DISPLACEMENT THEORY

The main theoretical perspective informing research in this area is displacement theory, which basically states that TV viewing takes time away from reading and other activities beneficial to children's development. However, the earliest studies in both the United States and Europe failed to find consistent evidence for such an effect. Rather, it appears that other mass media and play activities are television's main competitors and that children who neglect reading because of TV would neglect reading for something else if TV were not available. Moreover, far from displacing reading, some early studies even indicated that TV might actually be stimulating it by awakening interest in new subjects.

FROM BIVARIATE TO MULTIVARIATE RESEARCH

Although there has never been consistent evidence that television displaces reading, by the 1980s, a substantial number of studies had reported negative correlations between reading achievement and TV viewing. However, many of these studies were based on cross-sectional data employing bivariate analyses that failed to control for possible mediating variables; as a result, it is impossible to address the question of causality. This led to the search for more sophisticated research designs making it possible to analyze different groups of children, different types of television content, and different areas of academic achievement. The results of such research considerably refined the nature of the relationship by identifying significant mediating factors such as age (TV does not inhibit reading achievement among young children but does do so among teenagers), gender (in general boys watch more TV and have lower reading scores than do girls), cognitive development (among same-age younger children, the cognitively more developed watch more TV than the cognitively less developed, whereas the opposite is the case among older children and adolescents), and academic achievement (with curvilinear differences between high, average, and low academic achievers). Socioeconomic status differences, too, influence both TV-viewing frequency and reading achievement.

SOURCE: © Baby Blues Partnership, Kings Features Syndicate.

LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

In an attempt to bring some coherence to these disparate sets of results, some researchers have created large-scale, longitudinal designs employing multivariate analyses. In one such study, Rosengren and Windahl concluded that TV viewing could be both a positive and a negative influence, depending on the type of content viewed, the context surrounding the viewing, and the developmental stage of the viewers. In another study, Keith Roe tested the efficacy of the various approaches by comparing *negative models* (TV viewing leads to lower reading test scores), *positive models* (more viewing leads to higher reading test scores), and *school models* (school-based factors such as motivation and academic self-concept better explain reading test scores than do external factors such as media use). Although the results provided support for each perspective, the negative model appeared to be stronger than the positive model, while the strongest and most parsimonious results were provided by the school model. These and other studies also reaffirmed the importance of age, gender, and socioeconomic status in mediating the postulated relationships.

IMPACT OF TELEVISION: STILL NO CONSENSUS

Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the contradictory nature of the available evidence still leads researchers reviewing the field to draw directly conflicting conclusions. For example, in one of the most extensive reviews, Susan Neuman concluded that there is no reliable, replicable evidence for the postulated (negative) effects relationship. According to her, the critical factor is less the medium of communication than the family learning environment. Conversely, following their review, Koolstra and van der Voort, while admitting that the evidence is mixed and inconclusive, nevertheless came to the conclusion that a negative effect on children's reading as a result of TV exposure remains the most plausible working hypothesis. The results of their own studies indicated a weak TV-induced deterioration in children's attitudes toward, and ability to concentrate on, reading. Meanwhile, following a recent longitudinal study of German children, Ennemoser concluded that despite some evidence for a causal relationship between television and reading achievement, the underlying mechanism of the television effect remains unclear, with conventional hypotheses unsuited to its complexity.

Clearly, the case is still under examination, and the jury is still out.

—Keith Roe

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Digital Literacy; Educational Television, Effects of; School-Age Children, Impact of the Media on; Social Class; Television, Child Variables and Use of; Television, Viewer Age and

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READING, LITERACY AND

Literacy is defined as the cognitive processing of text information, a motivational attitude toward reading, and the integration of texts into everyday life. Cognitive processing involves comprehending words and sentences, creating meaning from them, and integrating the contents into existing knowledge. Motivational attitude means expecting to benefit from reading, as well as the cognitive or a aesthetic processes involved, and making reading choices based on interests. Readers integrate text content into everyday life by connecting what they read to their own experiences, making subjective or objective evaluations, or transforming the text into priming for behavioral action.

THE READER'S COGNITIVE APPRENTICESHIP

Literacy is much more than the ability to recognize letters and to assign phonemes to them. Reading provides access to the cultural conventions people use to communicate and to understand their social environment. Cultural techniques are acquired through guided participation. Like the process of learning crafts, reading is taught to children through presentation and participation, that is, when a parent reads aloud to the child. In the beginning, the parent serves as a model for handling books appropriately (modeling) and then encourages and assists the child in retelling a picture story (coaching, scaffolding). As time goes by, the parent decreases the amount of assistance given to the child (fading). Later in the process, adults can encourage the child to talk about reading experiences (articulation) and think about different reading strategies (reflection). The learning processes of articulation and reflection are often found in academic reading instruction. To foster reading progress, there should be a close fit between the child's reading abilities and the support offered by the expert.

PARENTAL STRATEGIES IN STORY READING

Parents with different cultural backgrounds act differently when reading to preschoolers. The frequency of reading depends on ethnicity, child's age, number of siblings, and parents' education. Some researchers distinguish between parental "describers" and "comprehenders." Describers encourage the child to label and describe pictures, while comprehenders make sure that children draw conclusions beyond description and include personal experiences in the conversation about pictures and stories. Describers are often found in groups like the social underclass in the United States, families of immigrants from Turkey or Suriname in the Netherlands, and the Maori in New Zealand. At the age of 6, the children of comprehender families perform better in vocabulary tests and understanding of stories. Other characteristics of parental reading strategies may also affect these findings. For this reason, some researchers recommend that parents offer a broad range of ways to read, rather than training children in a single style. Then parents can use strategies that fit the child's reading development, the demands of the book, and the reading situation. For example, reading aloud in preschool, where many children may be sharing one book, involves a specific way of reading (performance-oriented style); detailed information about the book is offered at the beginning, followed by reading that is rarely interrupted with comments and explanations. There is also evidence that the willingness of the child to take an active part in the reading situation influences the parental reading style.

DEVELOPMENTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LITERACY

To visually record letters, words, and sentences, the eye alternates rapidly between focus and movement. In the first developmental stage, young readers engage with pictures, graphics, and symbols and interact with attachment figures. Later, distinct visual characteristics of written text stabilize, and a phonological representation of single characters gradually evolves. As a further precursor of literary language (language as used in writing rather than its oral form), children begin to understand the alphabetical principle of speech—the correspondence between graphemes (bits of text) and phonemes (bits of sound). After the development of this logographic strategy, a further alphabetic strategy follows, in which even unknown words can be read through an active application of the grapheme-phoneme correspondence.

At the age of 3 to 5 years, sensitivity to language sounds increases. This gain strongly depends on the ability to segment language by identifying spoken words and sentences. The focus of attention shifts from the meaning of language to its structure. This phonological awareness can influence the development of literary language. A child's phonological awareness develops in the context of the family; children growing up in unfavorable socioeconomic conditions show less elaborated phonological awareness. As a precursor of reading competence, the synthesis of terms is an essential ability. This happens when single phonemes are linked with meaningful words.

A further developmental step occurs when a child is able to record larger units in the reading process—first, morphemes, and later, words. A permanent matching with the individual semantic system is presumed in this process. The availability of mental models regarding different topics and the quality and quantity of relevant knowledge facilitate the acquisition of central text messages and the ability to distinguish them from other contents.

The comprehension of literary texts requires certain competences. Literary texts instruct readers to construct a situational model that enables them to make inferences about meaning. Readers must be able to recognize clues in the text that signal the need for inference related, for example, to beliefs, desires, and opinions of people. Specialized knowledge about typical scripts, narrative schemes, and literary genres must also be available. Many empirical studies address the ability to distinguish between fiction and reality and to understand irony.

PROMOTION OF LITERARY LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Phonological Awareness

To encourage phonological awareness, exercises can be used to give insight into the structure of language. Phonological awareness is enhanced by conscious listening as well as by rhyme exercises or exercises that give practice in identifying words and sentences.

Phonemic Awareness

Narrowly defined, phonological awareness consists of phonemic awareness. The term *phonemic awareness* summarizes competences in apperception, identification, and modification of phonemes. To encourage phonemic awareness, specific exercises in the pedagogical context can be effective, such as the isolation of phonemes, the recognition of identical phonemes in different words, the apperception of differences between phonemes, word synthesis through combining phonemes, and the segmentation of words through taking away, adding, or changing phonemes.

The systematic interrelations between spoken and written language and the basics of the alphabetical principle are taught by specific instruction on the relation between graphemes and phonemes.

Reading Fluency

Greater reading fluency often is associated with a better understanding of the text. Reading fluency can be improved through listening and active reading, especially when feedback is given frequently and when the intervention has small-scale objectives.

Strategies for Building Text Understanding

A better text understanding can be achieved through a flexible use of successful reading strategies. Examples include activating the reader's own knowledge before beginning, formulating hypotheses on the basis of headings, monitoring word understanding while reading, reflecting text understanding, forming

short paragraph summaries, testing of the hypotheses from headings at the end of the passage, and connecting text contents with the reader's own knowledge.

Cultural Communication

Various studies—for example, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development's survey of adolescent reading in many countries—have proved that cultural communication at home is the most important determinant of the amount of time spent reading, the diversity of materials read, attitudes toward reading, and reading competence. Investigations of reading in schools show a medium effect on the development of oral language and a moderate effect on reading development. Positive results have been achieved by giving working adults the opportunity to read out their favorite texts to pupils in the school setting.

An important research result about literature instruction is that every pupil should get the chance to develop his or her own text understanding and to talk about individual texts with peers. In some countries, an explicit goal of education is to help children learn to communicate thoughts and feelings provoked through lecture in conversations with their classmates. Book clubs have often been founded to further this aim. Pupils may use conversations about self-chosen readings to discuss cultural standards, values, and styles of discourse. It can be especially useful for adolescents who belong to ethnic minorities to include culture-specific forms of discourse (e.g., *signifying* as a form of talk in African American communities) into literature instruction.

READING MOTIVATION

In the transaction with (anticipated) text features, an evaluation of the text takes place based, on the one hand, on specific text category knowledge and, on the other, on an individual's reading self-concept. The latter develops as a consequence of successes and failures in reading. The resulting text-specific reading motivation helps explain individual reading competence, as opposed to basic cognitive competence. By factor analysis, three main parts of the construct of reading motivation can be identified: the above-mentioned reading self-concept, intrinsic reading motivation (individual range of interests), and extrinsic factors (potential indirect sources of enforcement). Motivational difficulties in acquiring written language skills are rarely discussed. In elementary school, a motivational decrease regarding text-based tasks can already be found. Reading motivation declines continually in the course of the school years up to adolescence.

The pleasure found in literary reading (the reading of novels, short stories, poetry, or plays) is much higher during adolescence than it was earlier, as teenage readers have learned to interpret texts and to ask interpretive questions. Besides easy access to books and sufficient time to read, motivation depends on the connection children see between their personal daily experiences and the content of the reading; in addition, children must be convinced that they can take an active role in their own cognitive development. Therefore, factors that enhance reading motivation in secondary school are real world interaction, interesting texts, autonomy, and collaboration with peers.

Reading motivations change in the course of development. For preschoolers, reading opens new and fantastic worlds. In elementary school, the readers themselves feel like heroes, while reading offers adolescents an opportunity to reflect on themselves. The systematic search for adequate interpretations of texts and relations to other texts does not begin until college for the most part. Young women often report a clearly higher level of reading motivation than young men do. This may be due to the fact that women are more likely to use literature to cope with critical life situations.

—Armin Castello and Michael Charlton

See also Literacy; Reading, History of; Reading, Patterns of

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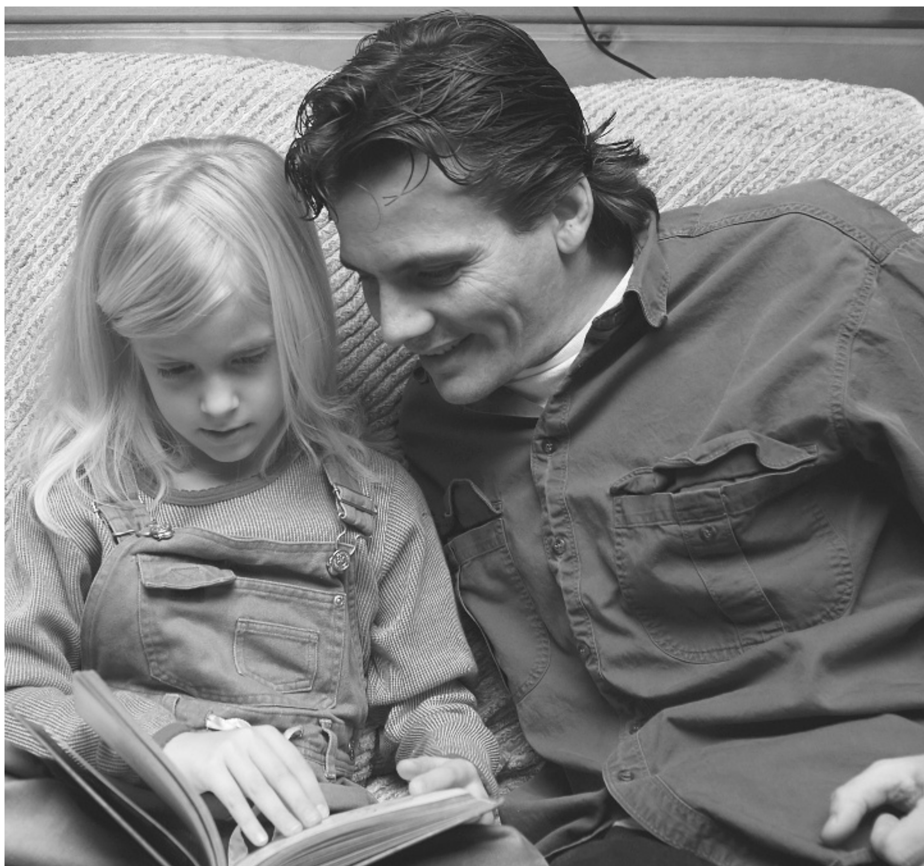
READING, PATTERNS OF

Reading is a vital ingredient in the human experience and the intellectual development of children and adolescents. Reading develops a capacity for focused attention and imaginative growth that enriches young



Reading aloud to young children is one of the most important ways to foster reading literacy. Reading and discussing what is read with children not only builds language and reading skills but also strengthens family relationships.

SOURCE: © Red Barn Studio, istockphoto.com; used with permission.

people. This entry examines the effect of dominant reading patterns and readership trends among children and adolescents, reasons for low reading levels, and the concept of *aliteracy* among children and adolescents.

Over the years, researchers have concluded that young people who read more books tend to have the highest level of participation in other activities. Louise M. Rosenblatt, an influential scholar of reading, maintains that the act of reading is a dynamic "transaction" between the reader and the text. In her 1978 book, *The Reader, the Text, the Poem,* she notes that the reader's recognition of verbal symbols transforms the text into something more than an object composed of paper and ink. Thus, according to Rosenblatt, the meaning of any text lies not in the work itself but in the reader's interaction with it.

Rosenblatt classified reading patterns into two types: efferent reading (reading for information) and aesthetic reading (reading for pleasure). *Efferent (*from the Latin word *efferre,* to carry away) reading is purposeful reading, which students are taught day after day in schools. Efferent readers connect cognitively with the text and plan to take something useful from it—such as answers for a test. According to Rosenblatt, the efferent reader's focus is on what will remain after the reading—such as information to be acquired or the solution to a problem. In contrast, the aesthetic reader's attention is on what he or she is experiencing during the reading event—that is, on what Rosenblatt describes as his or her relationship with that particular text. Aesthetic reading is done for the joy of it, and readers are absorbed in the experience of making meaning from verbal signs. Thus, aesthetic readers connect emotionally to the material.

DECLINE IN READING AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

In 1984, while Daniel J. Boorstin was the librarian of the U.S. Congress, he wrote an epochal report, *Books in Our Future*, in which he defined *aliteracy* as "having the ability to read but no interest in doing so." Boorstin said that aliteracy was widespread in the United States, and several articles in the report alluded to the growing number of nonreaders. Based on pertinent statistics—among them only about half of all Americans read regularly—he referred to the "twin menaces" of illiteracy and aliteracy.

According to the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, 1983,* issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, about 23 million American adults were functionally illiterate—they would not pass the simplest test of reading, writing, and comprehension—and about 13% of

American 17-year-olds were functionally illiterate. The educational process itself was identified as one cause; for example, the report noted that American students spend less time on homework than students in many other nations. The report concentrated primarily on American secondary education. A close examination of U.S. secondary schools found that the curricula no longer had a central purpose unifying all of the subjects.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals expressed concern in 1998 that by almost every measure, voluntary reading declines after elementary school because teachers consider students to be competent readers by the sixth grade and place the burden on them to continue to improve their skills and to choose to read without encouragement.

There is also strong research evidence that reading scores begin to decline when students leave the elementary grades. This decline in reading scores appears to correspond to the relative reduction in support for young adolescents' reading development. A study conducted by researchers at Indiana University compared results of the Iowa Test of Basic Reading Skills from 1944–1945, 1976, and 1986. Sixth-grade scores increased from 6.2 to 6.6 whereas 10th-grade scores dropped from 10.2 to 9.7. The decline of reading time in the secondary school day can also be attributed to the perception many have that young adolescents are already adequately proficient in reading and, thus, studying other areas—foreign language or computers—is a better use of their time. Yet, 40% of 9-year-olds scored below the basic level in reading on the 1994 National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Research indicates that children who are heavy television viewers (more than 3 hours per day) show the greatest decline in reading ability. A growing number of policymakers and educators around the world are concerned about low levels of reading among children and adolescents. They believe aliteracy is potentially as alarming as illiteracy because it affects students' potential for success in higher education.

REASONS FOR LOW READING LEVELS

The significant decline in reading among children and adolescents can be attributed to technological change in modern society. Young people and emerging adults are less interested in reading because they are more engaged by television and the rich multimedia content, interactivity, and ease of use of computer games and Internet communication. Children and adolescents are more responsive to these visually powerful media environments, in which reading is at best sparse or not critical for enjoying the medium or the message. With the rise of television and interactive media such as the Internet, popular media content has shifted away from words to images. Thus, aliterate children and adolescents can read, but they tend to avoid the activity. As more children and adolescents avoid reading, they become less informed, active, and independent minded.

There may be other reasons for low levels of reading. Faced with multiple media choices and increased pressures on their time, children and adolescents may be less inclined to read. They may prefer the visual to the verbal, choosing an entertainment-oriented medium such as television or computer games. Thus, for many young people, reading is a passive, outdated, and boring way to spend the time. A 2006 study by the American College Testing (ACT) program, an independent nonprofit body that tests college-bound students, concluded that reading in American high schools does not adequately challenge students. The study noted that many high school graduates lack the reading skills needed to succeed in college and in workforce training programs. The ACT study's findings suggest that many high school teachers are not incorporating higher-level reading materials—the types of texts that students will encounter in college and in the workforce—into their classes. The study was based on responses from 1.2 million 2005 high school graduates who took the ACT college admission and placement exam.

The ACT study identified being able to read complex texts as the "clearest differentiator" between students who are ready for college-level reading and those who are inadequately prepared. Students who are ready for college-level reading are better poised for success than are aliterate students. They are more likely to enroll in college in the fall following high school graduation, earn higher grades in college social science courses, earn higher first-year college grade point averages, and return to the same college for a second year. The ACT study found that just 51%— the lowest percentage in more than a decade—of the test takers met the ACT college readiness benchmark for reading. The percentage of students prepared for college-level reading peaked at 55% in 1999 and has declined since then.

WIDESPREAD DECLINE IN READING AMONG ADULTS

Children and adolescents learn from adults, and recent studies indicate a prevalent decline in reading among

adults. A 1999 Gallup Poll found that only 7% of Americans were voracious readers, reading more than a book a week, while some 59% said they had read fewer than 10 books in the previous year. According to the poll, the number of people who do not read at all has been rising for the past 20 years.

A significant part of the learning society and intellectual culture is embedded in literature. Literary reading (the reading of novels, short stories, poetry, or plays) is in dramatic decline with fewer than half of American adults now reading literature, concluded a 2002 survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the National Endowment for the Arts. The study also documents an overall decline of 10 percentage points in literary readers from 1982 to 2002, representing a loss of 20 million potential readers. The rate of decline has been increasing and, according to the survey, nearly tripled from 5% to 14% between 1992 and 2002.

The survey asked nearly 17,000 adults if, during the previous 12 months, they had read any novels, short stories, poetry, or plays that were not required for work or school. The rate of decline is steeper in some demographic groups. While literary reading declined among all age groups, the three youngest groups saw the steepest drops. The rate of decline for the youngest adults, ages 18 to 24, was 55% greater than that of the total adult population. According to the results of the study, women read more literature than men, but literary reading by both genders is declining. Only slightly more than one third of adult males now read literature. Reading among women is also declining significantly, but at a slower rate. Among ethnic and racial groups surveyed, literary reading decreased most strongly among Hispanic Americans, dropping by 10 percentage points. Literary reading declined among whites, African Americans, and Hispanics.

—Debashis "Deb" Aikat

See also Media Genre Preferences; Reading, Impact of TV on; Reading, Literacy and; Television, International Viewing Patterns and; Television, Viewer Age and

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REALITY TV

Although its history reaches back to the early days of television, reality-based programming, or reality TV, did not gain substantial popularity until the dawn of the 21st century. More than 100 new reality programs have aired since the summer of 2000, and the genre continues to dominate as the newest staple of the American TV diet. Because this phenomenon is so recent, there is little research on the effects of these programs on adolescents, despite evidence of their popularity. Nielsen ratings for the 2004–2005 television season indicated that of the 10 most frequently viewed programs among 12-to-17-year-olds, four were reality-based (*American Idol*, *Survivor*, *Extreme Makeover–Home Edition*, and *Nanny 911)*. Still, given the popularity of reality TV among young people, concerns over its potential impact have understandably been raised.

DEFINING REALITY TV

There is no clear industry standard or definition of reality TV. As a result, conceptualizations often err on the side of inclusiveness, capturing all programming claiming to present reality, including news programming, talk shows, and sporting events. Focusing solely on the programs that have emerged as part of the burgeoning reality TV phenomenon, for example, *Survivor*, *The Bachelor*, *American Idol*, and the like, Nabi and colleagues defined reality TV programming as programs in which real people play themselves without a script, with events—contrived or otherwise—placed in a narrative context. They further specify that reality programs show people in their own home or work environments rather than on a set and

that such programs are created primarily for viewer entertainment. As their research indicated that most people find reality programming to be only somewhat real, the element of being “unscripted” rather than “real” is likely the more defining feature of the genre.

Despite the unifying elements that bridge the range of reality programs, there are substantial differences among such programs, suggesting that several reality TV subgenres may exist. Nabi and colleagues identified five subtypes: romance (e.g., *The Bachelor*), drama (*Real World*), game show/competition (*Survivor*), talent (*American Idol*), Crime (*Cops*), and informational (*Trading Spaces*), and this list is likely to expand and shift as new programs are developed. However, because any one program may contain qualities reflective of multiple subgenres, the boundaries among these categories may be somewhat fluid.

WHY PEOPLE WATCH REALITY TV

In exploring why people watch reality TV and what sorts of people are attracted to such programming, Nabi and colleagues found that viewers are particularly drawn in by the suspenseful/unscripted nature of reality programs as well as the appeal of viewing others’ interpersonal dynamics. However, the contrived elements and potentially manipulative editing detract from its appeal. They also found that people who tend to be impulsive experience a greater range of gratifications when viewing reality TV. In related research, Reiss and Wiltz examined the association of 16 basic human motives with reality TV viewing, concluding that the motivation to attain social status or to feel self-important are most strongly related to reality TV consumption, followed by the desire for vengeance.

Considering different subgenres of reality programming, Nabi and colleagues found that people may enjoy reality programming for some of the same reasons they enjoy fictional dramatic programming. For example, they may experience positive emotions or be transported into the narrative. However, viewers seem to enjoy different subtypes of reality TV for different reasons. This study found that people enjoyed reality-crime programs for what they learned, but that they enjoyed reality-romance programs for the interpersonal insights gained. Given different underlying reasons for enjoyment, it is reasonable to expect different program types to engender different effects, although there is, in fact, very little research on the actual influence of reality TV.

EFFECTS OF REALITY TV VIEWING

Before the explosion of reality TV after 2000, crime-related programs, such as *Cops*, served as the focus for academic research on the effects of reality program viewing. Studies suggested that such programs overrepresented violent crime, crimes solved, non-whites as offenders, and whites as law enforcement officers. Research has also found that such misrepresentations can influence the way audiences think about crime in society. For example, Oliver and Armstrong found that Caucasians who were frequent viewers of reality crime programs were more likely to exaggerate crime prevalence estimates than those who watched less of this type of programming, suggesting that frequent viewers might be more likely to see the world as a dangerous and scary place. In related research, Eschholz and colleagues found that viewing programs like *Cops* strengthened confidence in law enforcement agencies, especially for white viewers.

Given the dearth of research on the effects of reality programs generally, it is unsurprising that the effects of such programs on adolescents are confined to mere speculation at this point. Critics have voiced concerns that exposure to reality programs might negatively alter young people’s expectations in terms of, for example, romantic relationships, sexual behavior, body image, alcohol consumption, gendered behavior, and the like, which in turn might pose physical and psychological risks to young viewers. Furthermore, as reality programs starring adolescents proliferate (e.g., *The Scholar*, *Brat Camp, Gene Simmons’ Rock School*), concern over the effect of program participation has also been raised. It is important to point out that these are long-standing worries regarding television programming generally, not solely reality TV. To the extent that reality TV programs are both perceived as more realistic and also misrepresent reality, such concerns may be well-founded. However, it is important to recognize that if constructed with positive intentions, reality TV has the potential to serve as a positive influence, promoting cooperation and healthful behaviors. Thus, the content of individual reality programs, rather than the genre itself, will ultimately determine the extent to which concerns about the effects of reality TV viewing on adolescents are justified.

—Robin Nabi

See also Television, Motivations for Viewing of

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REGULATION, ELECTRONIC GAMES

The phenomenal growth of electronic gaming technology, both in popularity and sophistication, has been paralleled by calls for increased regulation of the medium due to concerns about the potential harmful effects of game play on children. Politicians, parent advocacy groups, and other critics of electronic games have been particularly concerned about the interactive depictions of violence and sexuality in popular titles. Over time, pro-regulation forces have attempted to shield children from games by introducing anti-game legislation and by pressuring the industry and retailers to self-regulate, with mixed success.

EARLY ATTEMPTS TO REGULATE

The first significant attempts to regulate electronic games occurred at the local level in the early 1980s. These early efforts focused on restricting arcades out of concern that they encouraged truancy and delinquent behavior among children and teens. A small group of detractors such as PTA mother Ronnie Lam also voiced concerns about violence and sex in early games, but the graphics were so poor and abstract that few even noticed.

ELECTRONIC GAMES GO TO WASHINGTON

By the early 1990s, a more realistic generation of electronic games had become popular with children and adolescents, sparking much controversy. *Mortal Kombat*, a colossally successful fighting game featuring gobs of blood and gruesome finishing maneuvers, delighted fans but shocked parents and politicians,

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) has developed and launched a national ad campaign that includes public service announcements like the one above, which appear in print, online, and on radio and TV. The campaign, featuring the slogan "OK to Play?," urges parents and others to use both rating symbols and content descriptors in order to make informed computer and video game purchase decisions. The ESRB provides ratings and advertising guidelines for more than 1,000 electronic games per year. Ratings are determined by a consensus of at least three trained evaluators who review videotaped footage of the game as well as a questionnaire filled out by the game's publisher. In addition to the ratings for age groups, there are more than 30 content descriptors that refer to violence, sex, language, nudity, substance abuse, gambling, humor and other potentially sensitive subject matter.

who launched a crusade against electronic games. Beginning in 1983, Senators Joseph Lieberman and Herb Kohl spearheaded hearings investigating the industry. They called representatives from the major game manufacturers in front of Congress and demanded that something be done to protect children from exposure to certain types of content. In addition to the ghastly violence in *Mortal Kombat*, the sexual portrayals in the full-motion video game, *Night Trap,* were singled out during the hearings. Under threat of governmental intervention and possible censorship, game producers came up with their own solution. They created an organization known as the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) to represent their interests and through it proposed a game ratings system.

SELF-REGULATION AND THE ESRB

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), according to the organization website, is a "self-regulatory body for the interactive entertainment software industry." It independently rates video and computer games. The ESRB ratings system was received favorably by Senators Lieberman and Kohl and has been praised for being the most comprehensive media ratings scheme. ESRB ratings now appear on the boxes of all major games, with two parts to each rating. The first part, the *ratings symbol*, suggests the age-appropriateness of a game. Common ratings symbols include E for Everyone, T for Teen, and M for Mature. The second part, *content descriptors*, indicate specific types of content in a game, usually the one(s) that triggered the ratings symbol. The ESRB has more than 30 common content descriptors indicating multiple varieties of violent, sexual, language, and drug-related content. This ratings system gives parents information to help them decide which games are appropriate for their children.

RECENT REGULATORY ACTION

Attempts to regulate electronic games did not end with the creation of the ESRB, due to highly publicized events such as the 1999 Columbine school shootings, which some blamed on computer game play, and also on the emergence of controversial new titles, particularly the *Grand Theft Auto* series. In these games, which rose to popularity in the early 2000s, players assume the role of a carjacking criminal who can be made to perform antisocial behaviors ranging from killing police to beating prostitutes to death after having off-screen sex with them. The severity and breadth of objectionable content in the *Grand Theft Auto* series focused attention on other areas that should be regulated, such as the marketing of games to children and retailer enforcement of the ratings system.

Enforcement of the ratings system has received a great deal of recent attention. Since 2003, several U.S. states (e.g., Illinois and California) have introduced legislation that would make the selling of violent or sexually explicit games to minors a crime. However, most of these bills have been challenged by the ESA and struck down by courts on grounds that they violate free speech rights.

An alternative approach is increased self-regulation. The Interactive Merchants Trade Association (IMTA) represents almost all major game retailers, and member stores have recently pledged to restrict the sale of M-rated games to minors. The success of this initiative has been questioned, however. The National Institute on Media and Family releases a yearly report card with information about the effectiveness of game regulation, and it continually gives low scores to retailer ratings enforcement (although the 2004 report card indicated some improvement over the previous year).

THE ONGOING CONTROVERSY

A key issue in the ongoing battle over electronic game regulation concerns whether or not games are entitled to free speech protection. In many countries, violent game titles have been censored or banned outright, but this seems unlikely to happen in the United States. As pointed out in work by James Ivory, the willingness of federal courts to restrict the sale of games has diminished over time, due to the technological advances of the medium. While the early electronic game *Pong* may have been little more than the video equivalent of a ping pong match, most current games incorporate narrative, music, and other components of books and films. The addition of these artistic elements aligns games with protected forms of speech and has been made possible by advances in game technology over time.

Technological advances of electronic games are emerging as another important issue that could impact future regulation. In summer 2005, hidden sexually explicit scenes were discovered in *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*, prompting Senator Hillary Clinton and others to call once again for more controls on violent and sexually explicit games. It is significant that the sex scenes were not caught by the ESRB, which likely would have rated the game Adults Only instead of Mature if they had seen that material. This brought

attention to the fact that the huge interactive landscapes of many contemporary electronic games may not be possible to fully and accurately rate using existing techniques. As electronic games continue to evolve and become even more sophisticated, the means by which they are regulated will likely need to evolve as well, making the regulation of electronic games an ongoing process in need of attention.

—Paul Skalski

See also Aggression Electronic Games and; Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Games, Violence in

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REGULATION, INDUSTRY SELF-REGULATION

Media industry self-regulation evolves as a response to external criticism and is often implemented as a way to preclude threats of legislation. Public and legislative concern about media reflects society's normative ideal of what media should and should not do in our culture. Particularly where children and adolescents are concerned, there is tremendous interest in mitigating the potentially negative effects of media content and media use and encouraging the positive contributions media can make. But, while calls for government oversight are made, First Amendment guarantees of free speech and free press prohibit most direct government interference in content-based decisions. Pressuring media to self-regulate is a way to address concerns without having to raise the specter of constitutional issues.

Self-regulation, by definition, puts media industry personnel in charge of overseeing their own media products. Skeptics must be persuaded the industry is making a genuine effort to address the collective concerns of the public. Self-regulation may also, however, be more agile than government regulation in response to changes in the industry such as new technological developments.

Ratings systems are the most evident form of self-regulation that addresses issues with which parents are concerned. The movie industry has age-based ratings. The music industry has warning labels attached to the packaging of recordings with explicit lyrics. Television programs are rated with a combination of age-based and content-based distinctions. Video games are assigned age-based ratings, and some basic content information is available on packaging. Each of these systems is administered either by individual media producers or by an industry trade association. None of the systems uses psychologists or child development experts to help assign ratings. Each of the ratings systems is unique, which makes it difficult for parents to keep track of what each rating truly means. There has been some movement to create a uniform ratings system that could be applied across different forms of media, but so far this service is available only through for-profit companies.

The other prominent media self-regulatory systems apply to the advertising industry and are encouraged by the Federal Trade Commission. Of particular interest regarding children and adolescents is the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), a division of the Council of Better Business Bureaus. This group was formed in the mid-1970s at the request of the advertising industry. Their primary function is to review advertising directed at children under 12 and to ensure that it is true and accurate and takes into account the level of cognitive development of its target audience. Some areas of advertising that receive scrutiny include food products (especially junk food), alcoholic beverages, and violent or explicit media content, especially movies, music, and video games.

Other forms of self-regulation are less well known. Many media organizations have codes of ethics, or a list of standards and practices by which they are to abide. Specific news outlets, from the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* to the *New York Times* have policies designed to address day-to-day challenges. Professional organizations like the American Society of Media

Photographers spell out more generalized principles for their members. The difficulty with such codes is that they are often so general as to be useless in particular situations, or so specific that they don't address a wide range of controversial material. These internal codes are also not made widely available to the public, as media organizations fear they may face legal sanctions for violating their own written standards.

Some organizations have hired full-time media critics. Ken Auletta, columnist for the *New Yorker* and author of multiple books on media issues, is among the best known. Most other critics work for major print media, rather than for electronic media outlets. There are a few programs on radio and television that focus on issues in the media industries, including National Public Radio's *On the Media.* The responsibility of media critics is to report on industry issues and praise ethical media actions as well as criticize ethical lapses.

Another option some media organizations have adopted is to hire an ombudsman. Ombudsmen can be found in newsrooms across the United States, South America, Europe, and parts of Asia and the Middle East. Ombudsman positions are paid for by the organization, but generally, people serving as ombudsmen have a contractual promise that they will not be fired during the duration of their service. The ombudsman is to serve as an internal critic of ethical decision making and as a contact person for members of the public concerned about the organization's content. In the United States, ombudsman positions are primarily in newspaper newsrooms. Very few broadcast organizations have adopted this model of self-regulation. In addition, an ombudsman is intended to oversee ethical issues in news coverage, not in entertainment content.

Other venues for audience members to voice their concern are more widely available. Letters to the editor are an effective way for consumers of print media to express concern about particular content that may be problematic to parents. Most media organizations also have mechanisms for audience feedback via the Internet. Email and bulletin board postings have made it much easier for parents to let their views be known directly to media organizations.

Although relatively common in Europe, Asia and Africa, news councils in the United States are rare. The three existing councils are regional. A national news council existed briefly in the 1980s, but it ceased operation due to lack of media support. A news council is made up of a group of media industry insiders and members of the general public. People who feel they have been treated unfairly by a media organization can bring their complaint to the news council. Both sides present the facts of the case as they see them, and after deliberation, the council votes on whether the media organization violated its professional responsibilities. There are no sanctions, except the negative publicity the media organization endures about the council's actions. This model of self-regulation has generally been applied to news-related issues rather than entertainment content.

Media industries have also partnered with other professional organizations to establish guidelines for the portrayal of certain issues. For example, bench-bar-press guidelines have been established through the cooperation of judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, and members of the media. These guidelines address the appropriateness of information to be released regarding criminal cases. Other areas of concern have been the responsible portrayal of alcohol consumption, smoking, sexual behavior, violence, and drug use.

—Jennifer L. Lambe

See also Advertising, Regulation of; Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); First Amendment; Food Advertising, Regulation of; Media Education, Family Involvement in; Media Matters Campaign; Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Regulation (various entries); Television Ratings Systems, Parental Uses of

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REGULATION, INTERNET

Children are avid users of the Internet. The amount of time they spend in front of a computer screen increases with age. Children use the Internet both at

school and at home. Households with children are more likely to have access to the Internet than those without children. Parents and educators embrace the educational and entertainment values of the Internet. However, they are equally concerned about what children might encounter online. Two concerns stand out: children's exposure to sexually explicit materials and the loss of privacy. Although the government firmly supports self-regulation on the Internet, given the compelling interest of protecting minors, it has made continuous efforts to regulate the Internet along these two directions. Some of the efforts have succeeded while some have failed.

SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS ON THE INTERNET

The Communications Decency Act of 1996 was Congress's first attempt to regulate the content of the Internet to protect minors. As part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the Communications Decency Act was signed into law on February 8, 1996, making it a crime to knowingly transmit indecent or obscene communication by computer to a minor under 18 years of age. Soon after the law was passed, two separate three-judge panels in 1996 found the law unconstitutional. On June 26, 1997, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the law. It found that the act's "indecent transmission" and "patently offensive display" provisions violate the First Amendment's protection of free speech. The law was also found to be full of vagueness in key terms, lacking definitions of both *indecency* and *patent offensiveness.*

The Child Online Protection Act (COPA), which was Congress's response to the failure of the previous law, has narrower applications. The act applies only to Web communications and commercial websites. It prohibits commercial websites from knowingly transmitting pornographic materials on the Internet to minors (people under 17 years of age). The Child Online Protection Act was also challenged. In 1999, a U.S. District Court declared the law unconstitutional. In May 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court reviewed the ruling and returned the case to the Circuit Court for further review. In March 2003, the Third Circuit Court again struck down the law as unconstitutional on the ground that it is likely to be overbroad, which will hinder adults' access to this material. On June 29, 2004, the Supreme Court upheld the ruling of the Circuit Court. However, the Court acknowledged that given the rapid pace of Internet development, it is likely that filtering will be able to protect children online in the future. The Court referred the case back to the District Court for further investigation and action.

The Children's Internet Protection Act represents a third attempt by Congress to limit children's exposure to sexually explicit materials on the Internet. Passed on December 15, 2000, the law addresses concerns about children's access to the Internet in schools and libraries. Under the act, schools and libraries that receive discounts (e-rate programs) for their Internet access must take measures to block or filter any pictures that are obscene, contain child pornography, or are harmful to minors. Schools are required to adopt a policy to monitor children's online activities. The law was challenged by the American Library Association in 2001, and a lower court found the application of the act to libraries unconstitutional. However, on June 23, 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed that decision, ruling that public libraries must purchase filtering software and comply with all portions of the act.

In 2002, Congress passed Dot Kids Implementation and Efficiency Act, and it was signed into law on December 4, 2002. The purpose of this law is to provide a safe online environment for children, promote positive experiences, and prevent children from being exposed to harmful materials. The act requires NeuStar, a private technology company, to create a second-level domain, a *kids.us,* which will be used for websites geared toward children younger than 13. Websites that are willing to register for the domain must abide by certain rules to ensure the child-friendly nature of the sites. NeuStar is responsible for reviewing the content of the websites before registration and for continuously monitoring the content.

CHILDREN'S PRIVACY

In 1996, the Center for Media Education issued *The Web of Deception*, reporting that websites for children were using various tactics to collect personal information from children without seeking prior parental permission. The Federal Trade Commission conducted its own study in 1998 and concluded that children's privacy was not protected on the Internet. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which was passed by Congress in 1998 and took effect in April 2000, applies to all commercial websites that target children under 13 and to websites that knowingly collect personal information from children. The

act requires website operators to (a) post privacy policy on their homepages as well as pages where personal information is collected; (b) collect only the necessary information that will allow children to participate in online activities; (c) ask for verifiable parental permission before they collect personal information from children; and (d) allow parents to review and delete personal information that is collected about their children. The Federal Trade Commission is responsible for the enforcement of the law. So far, the commission has fined a number of Web operators in violation.

Table 1 Court Rulings Related to Internet Regulation

Ashcroft v. American Civil Liberties Union, 542 U.S. 656 (2004).
Child Online Protection Act, 47 U.S.C.S. §231 (1998).
Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, 15 U.S.C.S. §6501 (1998).
Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C.S. §902 (2000).
Communications Decency Act, 47 U.S.C.S. §223 (2000).
Dot Kids Implementation and Efficiency Act, 47 U.S.C.S. §901 (2002).
Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union, 521 U.S. 844 (1997).
United States v. American Civil Liberties Union, 540 U.S. 93 (2003).

With the fast development of the Internet, children are facing an ever more sophisticated online environment. New issues and concerns emerge frequently, such as host-selling online. The government is facing continuous challenges of protecting children's interests online.

—Xiaomei Cai

See also Center for Media Education (CME); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Federal Trade Commission; Websites, Children's

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REGULATION, MOVIES

In their early years, movies did not have First Amendment protection in the United States, and states established film censorship boards. However, in the latter half of the 20th century, First Amendment protection was extended to films, and industry self-regulation became the norm. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) established an age-based ratings system in 1968. Despite its flaws, the MPAA's ratings system has served as a model for other media, especially television and video games. Regardless of the medium, the burden on parents is growing as technology speeds forward, making it increasingly difficult for them to monitor what their children consume. Industry self-regulation—or self-categorization—can only place labels on content; it is up to parents to stay informed and decide what's appropriate for their children.

THE EARLY YEARS

In the early days of the movie industry, government censors and industry regulators battled for control of screen content. Pennsylvania was the first state to institute a film censorship board in 1911, and other states followed suit. Spurred on by the U.S. Supreme Court's 1915 decision in the *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio* case, which deemed film a "business pure and simple" and denied movies the First Amendment protection granted to print media, the push was on for a federal film censorship board.

The studio heads hired Will Hays, a former postmaster general under President Warren G. Harding, to "clean" the screen and to promote industry self-regulation over state and federal censorship boards. Hays fought censorship boards successfully throughout the 1920s, and, in 1930, the Hays Code—a list of content prohibitions and sensitive areas—of self-regulation was written. However, with the country in the grips of the Depression and box office revenue declining, filmmakers ignored the code, instead infusing greater levels of sex and violence into films to lure people back into theaters. Social reformers, Catholic leaders, politicians, and—for the first time—researchers (as part of the Payne Fund Studies published in 1933) decried the dangerous influences of films on the audience. In 1934, with the threat of a federal censorship board renewed, the Hays Code became the Production Code, and Joseph Breen was named head of the Production Code Administration (PCA). Under Breen, many popular films from the early 1930s were taken out of circulation, and new

productions needed a "seal of approval" to play in mainstream theaters. For a brief period of time, the PCA and Breen wielded considerable power in Hollywood.

FROM PRODUCTION CODE TO RATINGS SYSTEM

On November 1, 1968, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) replaced the Production Code with an age-based ratings system, but the code's slow death actually began shortly after World War II. In 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the *Burstyn v. Wilson* case, which dealt with producer Joseph Burstyn's attempt to show Italian director Roberto Rossellini's, *The Miracle,* believed by some to be sacrilegious, in the United States and declared film a "significant medium for the communication of ideas." First Amendment protection for motion pictures would soon follow.

Replacing the code with ratings reflects a philosophical change on the part of regulators, a movement from content prohibition to content categorization. Instead of altering content to receive a seal of approval, filmmakers could now submit their work and have it rated accordingly. The MPAA gives the responsibility of rating films to the Classification and Ratings Administration (CARA), a board originally composed of mental health professionals and educators, but now made up of parents. The original ratings in 1968 were G (general audience), M (mature), R (restricted for under 16), and X (no children under 18).

Since its inception, the ratings system has undergone several changes. The age limit for R was raised from 16 to 17. Believing that the M rating may cause confusion, the MPAA changed it to GP (general audiences, parental guidance suggested), and finally to PG (parental guidance suggested). The MPAA also started including rating descriptions—brief explanations of why a film received its rating—first for R and subsequently for films in all rating categories. The most recent category changes were the creation of PG-13 (parents strongly cautioned) in 1984, and the replacement of X with NC-17 (no children 17 and under) in 1990. While the NC-17 rating has had little impact on film content and regulation, the PG-13 rating's effect has been significant. The MPAA claims that ratings are intended for parents with minor children only, and MPAA research indicates they are satisfied with the system, but the question of how to rate content is a controversial one that still exists today.

CRITICISMS OF THE RATINGS SYSTEM

As in the 1930s, politicians, conservative critics, and academics have recently been vocal critics of the ratings system. A primary charge against the MPAA is that ratings operate under a double standard in that violent content is treated more leniently than sexual content, despite research suggesting greater potential harm associated with viewing media violence. Studies examining ratings descriptions of R- and NC-17-rated films, and comparing content from R-rated and NC-17-rated or unrated versions of the same films support the belief that the ratings system allows children easier access to graphic violence than graphic sex.

Another criticism is that powerful studios and influential people get preferential treatment by the MPAA. Anecdotally, the 1984 creation of the PG-13 is unofficially attributed—in part at least—to *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, which was judged too violent for PG, but, because it was a Steven Spielberg-George Lucas action film, did not receive an R rating.

RATINGS CREEP

Perhaps the strongest criticism of the ratings system is "creep," the slippage over time of increasingly adult content into less restrictive rating categories. Research into ratings creep has focused primarily on descriptive language used by the MPAA and others. One study looked at MPAA rating descriptions and non-MPAA websites that offer movie content information to find evidence of ratings creep. In a separate study, researchers focused on ratings creep in descriptions for PG-13-rated films, primarily because this unrestricted category includes a majority of the top-grossing films of all time and accounts for a growing percentage of films rated and released each year. In just the 3-year period examined, descriptions of PG-13-rated films indicated an increase in adult content overall, showed marginal gains in sexual content, and demonstrated more intense violent content. In short, the current PG-13-rated movie may contain more sex and more graphic violence than one that received the same rating a few years ago.

—Ron Leone

See also First Amendment; Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Movies, Sexuality in; Movies, Substance Abuse in; Movies, Violence in; Parental Advisory Labels and Rating Systems; Parental Regulation

of Children's Media; Rating Systems, Parental Use of; Regulation, Industry Self-Regulation; Regulation, Television; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of

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REGULATION, MUSIC

Two main issues currently surround the regulation of music and the music industry: explicit lyrics referring to sex, violence, or substance abuse and Internet file sharing. This entry addresses the background of each issue and what legal steps have been taken to regulate them.

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) is the trade group representing the U.S. recording industry. Its mission is to foster business and legal climates that support and promote its members' creative and financial vitality. RIAA members mostly consist of record companies who manufacture and distribute about 90% of all commercially sold sound recordings produced in the United States. The mission of the RIAA thus involves two overarching goals: protecting the artists' First Amendment rights and protecting the intellectual property rights of artists and record companies.

"The Parental Advisory is a notice to consumers that recordings identified by this logo may contain strong language or depictions of violence, sex or substance abuse. Parental discretion is advised."

Figure 1 Parental Advisory Label and Language

SOURCE: Parental Advisory, 2003. Retrieved October 13, 2005, from http://www.riaa.com/issues/parents/advisory.asp

REGULATION OF MUSIC LYRICS

The uproar over music lyrics may seem recent, but in fact, the banning of music goes back hundreds of years. Yet, with the rise of heavy metal in the early to mid-1980s, and later with the rise of hip hop and rap in the late 1980s, concerns of obscenity, pornography, and indecencies were brought to the forefront.

In 1985, the RIAA agreed with the National Parent Teacher Association and the Parents Music Resource Center to include warning labels on albums containing explicit lyrics that depicted sex, violence, or substance abuse (see Figure 1). It was hoped the decision would facilitate intelligent decision making on the part of parents regarding their children's album selections. Although the recording companies and the artists decide which albums should be labeled, the RIAA contends that the practice of "parental advisory" labeling is widely adhered to within the recording industry.

In addition to the parental advisory label, it is now common for artists and record companies to record two versions of an album—an explicit version and an edited version—allowing options for parents and consumers without censoring the speech of the artists. Certain retail stores sell only the edited versions of

albums. Other stores have policies forbidding the sale of explicit versions to consumers under 18 years old.

The advent of widespread online music retailing has made the regulation of explicit content somewhat problematic. The RIAA outlines voluntary guidelines for online retailers as it does for record companies, but because online music distributors are typically not affiliated with the record companies or the artists, online retailers make their own decisions about whether or not to follow the RIAA's Parental Advisory Policy.

As online distribution of music became commonplace in the mid-to-late 1990s, the issue of property rights climbed to the forefront of music regulation. This phenomenon led to the second important issue surrounding the regulation of the music industry: consumer file sharing.

ONLINE PIRACY

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 makes it a crime to circumvent antipiracy measures built into commercial software, outlaws the manufacture or sale of code-cracking devices for illegally copying software, limits Internet service providers from copyright infringement liabilities for transmitting information over the Internet, and requires webcasters to pay licensing fees to record companies. Despite the best intentions of this act, enforcement remains problematic because illegal file sharing involves millions of transactions per day.

The now-famous Napster case marked the true beginning in the fight against illegal file sharing. On December 7, 1999, RIAA on behalf of its members filed suit charging Napster with "contributory and vicarious copyright infringement." Napster, an online file sharing venue where members traded millions of sound recordings free of charge, had stated it was simply a conduit allowing people to share personal files. On February 12, 2001, after an initial appeal by Napster, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the District Court and the RIAA, ruling Napster to be in violation of copyright laws.

The Napster case was not the end of litigation against online file sharing. Suits against Aimster and Verizon soon followed. Despite these courtroom victories, the RIAA was not always successful in its quest to stop consumer file sharing. In April 2003, a U.S. district court in Los Angeles ruled in favor of Grokster and Morpheus and against the RIAA because these file-sharing companies allow users to swap music files directly rather than going through a central server, which had been Napster's downfall. Judge Stephen Wilson likened the scenario to selling videocassette recorders (VCRs): The manufacturers of VCRs cannot be held liable for copyright infringements carried out by those who purchase VCRs. The RIAA has since redirected its efforts against Internet piracy from peer-to-peer (P2P) software providers to individual users, taking legal action against numerous consumers.

The recording industry loses an estimated $4.2 billion to piracy each year worldwide. *Piracy* generally refers to the duplication and distribution of sound recordings without permission from the record company. Online piracy specifically refers to the unauthorized uploading of a copyrighted sound recording and making it available to the public, or downloading a sound recording from an Internet site, even if the recording is not resold. In a speech to the New York State Bar Association and International Bar Association on October 23, 2003, addressing the legal issues involved in peer-to-peer file sharing, John G. Malcolm, deputy assistant attorney general of the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Division, stated,

> We do not believe . . . that new technologies, including the Internet, should be exempted from existing laws and societal norms simply because they are novel or easy to use . . . Can (we) take whatever we want, whenever we want it without paying for it just because we now have the means to do so?

In response to the illegal file-sharing trend, most major record labels have developed plans for subscription-based online sales. Internet file-sharing companies such as the iTunes Music Store, Pressplay, and RealPlayer have made copyrighted songs and albums legally available for online purchase in an à la carte format. The battle wages on, however, as digital technologies become more efficient and sophisticated. The latest trend is that of cellular phone ring tones; cell phone users may download (for a price) original music recordings from many popular albums, replacing the standard telephone ring. Consumers can install different ring tones to identify different callers, creating a scramble among record companies, artists, webcasters, and lawmakers to see who can best regulate and profit from the ever-changing phenomenon that is digital technology.

—Michelle Arganbright

See also Music, Transgressive History of; Music Lyrics, Effects of

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For information on specific legal cases, see http://www.riaa.com/news/filings/default.asp

REGULATION, RADIO

Radio is a category of electronic media under the jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), an independent administrative agency established by Congress in the Communications Act of 1934. Previously, Congress had established the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) in the Radio Act of 1927 to allocate broadcast radio frequencies. The 1934 act replaced the FRC with the FCC and expanded the regulatory authority of the agency.

Radio broadcasts use the electromagnetic spectrum, which is federally regulated as a national public resource. The FCC has exclusive authority from Congress to allocate the AM and FM bands of the spectrum by dividing them into assignable commercial and noncommercial frequencies and allotting them to individual stations intended to serve particular geographic locations, such as an area surrounding a small town or major city. Through licensing proceedings, the FCC assigns AM and FM radio frequencies to station operators called *licensees,* who are required by law to serve the public interest in exchange for the privilege of using the electromagnetic spectrum to broadcast.

The FCC regulates the structure of broadcast radio by such means as licensing application and renewal proceedings and also by enforcing such rules as those that limit the number of AM and FM radio stations that a single company can legally control in a local broadcast market. In addition, the FCC enforces some content regulations, including rules prohibiting broadcast obscenity and most tobacco advertising and a rule that seeks to shield children from indecent and profane broadcasts. With broadcast and cable television, the FCC enforces rules that regulate aspects of children's programming and advertising; there are no similar rules for radio broadcasters.

OBSCENITY, INDECENCY, AND PROFANITY IN RADIO BROADCASTS

Provisions in the Communications Act prohibit "obscene, indecent or profane language by means of radio communications," and the FCC is authorized to promulgate rules enforcing these provisions. Obscenity, as a constitutionally defined category of sexual expression, is devoid of First Amendment protection and banned in all media including electronic media like radio. Indecency and profanity, which are categories of nonobscene expression defined by the FCC, are protected by the First Amendment, and courts have placed constitutional limits on the extent to which the FCC can regulate these types of content on the airwaves. Current FCC rules allow nonobscene indecency and profanity in radio and television broadcasts but only during designated hours of the day when children are not likely to be part of the audience.

The U.S. Supreme Court has defined *obscenity* as material that contains patently offensive descriptions or depictions of sexual conduct and, when taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest and lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. The "prurient interest" requirement is judged from the perspective of a reasonable person applying contemporary community standards. The FCC enforces the ban on broadcast obscenity at all times on regulated electronic media, including radio.

The FCC has defined *indecency* as "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs." The FCC has defined *profanity* as "including language that denot[es] certain of those personally reviling epithets naturally tending to provoke violent resentment or denoting language so grossly offensive to members of the public who actually hear it as to amount to a nuisance." FCC rules allow radio and television broadcasters to air nonobscene indecency and profanity only during the "safe-harbor" time period from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. each day. The FCC can fine a broadcast radio station up to $32,500 per incident for broadcasting indecency or profanity outside the safe-harbor time period. The FCC does not have authority to regulate indecency or profanity on satellite, cable, or the Internet.

In 1995, in *Action for Children's Television v. F.C.C.,* the U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit, approved the FCC's indecency definition. The court found the FCC could constitutionally use the safe-harbor approach to regulate broadcast indecency based on the strong governmental interest in shielding children from indecent broadcasts. Previously, in the 1978 case of *F.C.C. v. Pacifica Foundation,* the U.S. Supreme Court had upheld the constitutionality of FCC regulation of nonobscene indecency in radio broadcasts. In that case, the Court upheld a warning issued by the FCC to a radio station that had broadcast comedian George Carlin's "seven dirty words" monologue during daytime hours. In warning the station, the FCC found the radio broadcast indecent under the agency's definition. In its ruling, the Court concluded that broadcasting had become "uniquely pervasive" in the lives of the public and "uniquely accessible to children, even those too young to read." The Court concluded that the "special treatment of indecent broadcasting" was justified by the ease with which children could access broadcast material as compared to other media content.

BROADCAST RADIO AND ADVERTISING OF HARMFUL PRODUCTS

In the Federal Cigarette Labeling and Advertising Act, Congress banned advertising for cigarettes and little cigars as of January 1, 1971, for all electronic media under the jurisdiction of the FCC. Later that year, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a federal court judgment finding the ban constitutional under the First Amendment. In 1986, Congress passed the Comprehensive Smokeless Tobacco Health Education Act and included smokeless tobacco in the tobacco advertising ban for electronic media. The ban on tobacco advertising in regulated electronic media includes AM and FM radio broadcasts.

On the other hand, current federal restrictions on gambling advertising apply to broadcast television but not to radio. No federal legislation or FCC rule currently prohibits or specifically restricts alcoholic beverage advertising on regulated electronic media including radio. Whether and when to air such advertising is largely within the discretion of broadcast radio licensees, although an argument could be made that alcoholic beverage advertising during radio programs with high levels of underage listeners would violate the public interest standard.

—R. Michael Hoefges

See also Children's Television Act of 1990; Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Advertising and

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REGULATION, TELEVISION

The Communications Act of 1934 as amended requires that broadcast licensees serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. Since the 1960s, this has consistently been interpreted to include meeting the special needs of the child audience. Historically, regulators have focused on shielding children from violent and sexually explicit programming, ameliorating the

effects of advertising, and guaranteeing the provision of educational programming. Although the U.S. Congress sets the framework for regulating television, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decides how the public interest standard should be interpreted in particular situations and handles day-to-day enforcement.

REGULATION OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL

Federal law prohibits the broadcast of obscene, indecent, or profane material. Although the transmission of obscene material (commonly thought of as hard-core pornography) has not occurred on television, the broadcast of indecent and profane material has been a cause of concern for decades. The FCC defines *indecency* as "language or material that depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory activities or organs." *Profanity* is defined as "certain of those personally reviling epithets naturally tending to provoke violent resentment or denoting language so grossly offensive to members of the public who actually hear it as to amount to a nuisance."

Because indecent and profane materials are protected speech under the First Amendment, at least for adult consumption, the FCC has limited its enforcement of the indecency and profanity provisions to times of day when children are not likely to be in the broadcast audience, that is, between the hours of 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Broadcasters who air prohibited material during those hours are subject to administrative sanctions including fines in the amount of $32,500 per utterance. In mid-2006, Congress was considering proposals that would raise the maximum fines for such violations to as much as $500,000 per utterance. It is important to note that as of 2005, these rules apply only to broadcast television. Subscription television services such as those carried on cable systems or direct broadcast satellite systems may transmit indecent or profane programming at any time.

REGULATION OF VIOLENT PROGRAMMING

As of 2005, there are no laws or regulations against the broadcast of violent programming on television. However, in 1996, Congress required the television industry to develop a program ratings code that would enable parents to determine the content of programs. These program ratings are listed in television program guides and appear in the corner of viewers' television screens at the beginning of each program. Also in 1996, Congress required that all new television sets be equipped with a device that would allow parents to exclude programs with certain ratings from being seen in the home. This *V-chip* reads the television program codes as they are being transmitted to the television receiver. Parents can then set the V-chip to exclude any program with a particular rating code—one indicating violent content, for example. The ratings code and V-chip can also be used to help parents censor programs with sexual material.

REGULATION OF ADVERTISING DIRECTED TOWARD CHILDREN

Recognizing that children's cognitive development might make it difficult for them to fully understand the purpose and intent of advertising, the FCC in 1974 issued a policy statement exhorting broadcasters to limit the number of commercials aimed at children. The statement also encouraged programmers to place *bumpers*—announcements helping children to understand a program change was coming—between program material and commercials. The commission also warned against using children's television show hosts to sell or promote products during a television program.

In the Children's Television Act of 1990, Congress set strict advertising limits on programs directed toward children age 12 and younger. According to the act, no more than 12 minutes of commercial material per hour may appear in children's programs on weekdays; on weekends, the limit is 10.5 minutes of commercial material per hour. Responding to concerns that some children's cartoons based on toy lines (e.g., G.I. Joe, the Smurfs) may in fact be no more than long commercials for the toys, Congress also prohibited the broadcast of "program-length commercials," leaving a definition of the term to the FCC. The commission has defined program-length commercials as "a program associated with a product in which commercials for that product aired." Thus, commercials for G.I. Joe action figures may not be aired during the *G.I. Joe* program, for example.

In a recent action, the FCC banned the practice of including website addresses in children's television programs if those addresses lead children to sites promoting the sale of products or services. All of the

described limits on commercialization in children's television programs apply to both broadcast and cable network programming. Failure to abide by these limitations may lead to fines against the offending station or network.

PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN

The Children's Television Act of 1990 requires all broadcast television licensees to serve the educational and informational needs of children, defined by the FCC in this context as children 16 years of age and younger. FCC regulations currently require television licensees to air at least 3 hours of educational programming per week. Such programming must be *core* programming, which means that it must be at least 30 minutes in length and regularly scheduled at times when children are likely to be watching television, which the FCC defines as between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. For purposes of the act, educational programming is defined broadly as "content that serves children's cognitive/intellectual or social/emotional needs." The FCC considers compliance with these requirements when the station's licenses are up for renewal every 8 years. A licensee that does not adhere to these requirements conceivably could lose its broadcast license. The educational programming requirements described here apply only to broadcast television licensees; they do not apply to cable television networks.

—Michael A. McGregor

See also Advertising, Regulation of; Children's Television Act of 1990; Federal Communications Commission (various entries); Telecommunications Act of 1996; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; V-Chip (Violence Chip)

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RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Relationship marketing is often used interchangeably with other terms, such as *one-to-one marketing, behavioral marketing, database marketing,* and *customer relationship marketing,* all of which mean more or less the same thing. The strategy is at the heart of a new digital marketing paradigm that emerged during the 1990s with the rapid growth and commercialization of the Internet. Among its early and influential proponents were Don Peppers and Martha Rogers, whose 1993 book, *The One to One Future* spawned a series of handbooks, seminars, articles, and conferences and quickly became a valued resource for online marketers. Relationship marketing is based on the principle of developing unique, long-term relationships with individual customers to create personalized marketing and sales appeals based on their individual preferences and behaviors. It has become a core strategy for marketers targeting teenagers, not only on the Web, but also through cell phones, video games, and other digital media.

Online marketers employ a variety of techniques to get to know each customer as intimately as possible. One method is the use of incentives, such as games, surveys, discounts, and prizes, to get individuals to supply personal information about themselves. For example, a survey can collect name, address, and email address, along with information about income level, attitudes, fears, and behaviors. While this is also a common direct marketing practice in "offline" media, such forms of data collection can become more intrusive in online and other interactive media, where the response time is quick and the incentives (e.g., free email, discounts, and other kinds of instant gratifications) can be hard to resist. Another method is the covert tracking of online behavior. Unlike TV ratings, which generally use anonymous aggregate numbers to reveal the viewing behavior of key demographic groups, online usage data can track how individuals respond to and interact with advertising. A burgeoning industry has developed to provide an array of *personalization technologies,* including *cookies,* which have been integrated into the basic design of interactive marketing. Through these various techniques, marketers compile a detailed profile of each customer, including not only demographic data but also his or her response to and interaction with advertising messages. The information can then be used to create and refine online ads and buying opportunities especially tailored

to the psychographic and behavioral patterns of the individual. In some cases, the profiles are also sold to third parties.

In 1998, in response to a lobbying effort by children's advocacy and privacy groups, Congress passed the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which restricts the collection of personal information by Web operators from children under the age of 13. As a result, many online children's marketers were forced to curtail the growing practice of database marketing targeted at individual children. However, no government protections have been established for adolescents. Consequently, most of the websites aimed at teenagers make extensive use of data collection, profiling, and targeted advertising.

—Kathryn C. Montgomery

See also Advertising, Exposure to; Advertising, Market Size and

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WEBSITES

Association for the Advancement of Relationship Marketing: http://www.aarm.org

RELATIONSHIPS, ONLINE

See Online Relationships

RESEARCH METHODS, CHILDREN AND

Children and teenagers represent a very special clientele when it comes to research; they are still developing and are challenged by the various influences on their identity development as they seek to find their place in life; to learn about themselves by dealing with others; to interact with and position themselves within the family, the peer group, and other institutions; and to perceive their gender and act according to their role. Often, they turn for help to the available media. The theoretical concept of development tasks may be used as a framework for research involving young people. The development of young people is no longer viewed as occurring in strictly separate stages but rather is seen as an individual process that takes place amid various complex social demands. Media research with children, therefore, refers to three related but distinct processes Valkenburg identifies as imaginative play, daydreaming, and creativity. Above all, the research on children requires a wide range of methodologies, all of which must be interpreted according to age-related ways of perception and processing, allowing for an analysis of how the child makes meaning from different perspectives and with various methods and instruments. Procedures must be flexible and adequate for every situation while allowing young research participants to promote their own points of view, fostering a specific child-oriented need and topic structure. Children may still find it difficult to concentrate on the experimental task for long and may express their concerns accordingly; in addition, they are seldom aware of the consequences of their media use.

A variety of methods are needed to re-enact, analyze, and document children's media use. Cognitive, emotional, and social stages of media processing can be distinguished only analytically because they are always intertwined in the process of actual media interaction, and children do not talk about them as if they were separate stages. Only a combination of various methods—qualitative and quantitative—allows for an adequate approach to the field of research and particular investigations. The complex way in which

children deal with media requires that analysis reflect a variety of methods and perspectives. Triangulations in research make this possible by specifically combining research perspectives and methods that are suitable for considering various aspects of a problem.

In media research involving children, questioning and observation are the predominant methods. Questioning—especially with the help of main thread interviews—is the only direct approach to gain insight into the child's self-assessment, even though it is quite demanding for the researcher. When children are interviewed directly, the researcher is confronted with problems arising from the limited ability of children to express themselves verbally, which makes the communication between researcher and subject more difficult. A direct interview first and foremost requires the interviewer to show empathy and sensitivity in working with children; of course, test materials, test conditions, and specific demands suitable for work with children are needed. It seems reasonable to take the advice of Yarrow (1960), who suggests that the interviewer assign to the child an expert role.

With small children, it is appropriate to search for an age-specific approach to avoid anxiety and inhibition as well as to facilitate subconscious deductions and connections. The use of cartoons and drawings is recommended, and with preschool children, the introduction of a hand puppet may prove useful for mediation between researcher and subject. This may create a less asymmetric level and avoid socially expected answers. In addition, the hand puppet may facilitate subconscious deductions and connections. Puppets are familiar toys children use predominantly to express topics of self- and social assessment in a role play; "playing pretend"—a constituent of child role-play, especially at kindergarten age—may enable children to convey thoughts, feelings, desires, and hopes that underlie their actions.

A second and equally important empirical method is that of participant observation. One of its benefits is that it does not rely on verbal material; also, children are more adept than adults at ignoring the observer. An observation is, therefore, a reasonable alternative and extension to interviews or questionnaires. One disadvantage is a certain arbitrariness in choosing and defining observation units theoretically; consequently, it is important to ensure an intersubjective reenactment by making sure others can understand what the observer did. In addition, observation techniques require a lot of training for the observer.

In combination with observing everyday play situations designed as initiated role-play, participant observation may be a suitable approach to understanding the impact of media use on young children's behavior. Following the observation, the researcher may fall back on the most prominent form of play in social interaction with children of the same age—role-play—to access the underlying approach to meaning-making and meaning attribution. This is helpful when complex, multilayered mental experiences are to be described. Subjectively experienced spatial-temporal contexts related to the child's reaction to the place should be registered comprehensively during the survey. On top of that, the role-play method makes possible a wide range of natural patterns of behavior and nonverbal modes of expression.

In using children's drawings, extra attention should focus on nonverbal meaning contexts and explicit evaluation of the child's aesthetic responses to media, such as their favorite media figure on TV. Drawings provide an in-depth psychological insight into children's meaning-making that cannot be gained from methods such as interviews and participant observation of play situations. The analysis of drawings provides insight into basic and unconscious processing of media experiences. The symbolic content of drawings and their "hidden meaning," expressed through the choice of depicted objects and their relationships as well as stylistically determined features such as color, line, and form of objects, allow the researcher to deduce the meaning children may have gained from the content of media, their perceptive and intellectual abilities (through choice of forms and themes), their emotional condition at the time of drawing (type of line, graphic expression, disposition, character), and their developmental stage.

Experiments are carried out primarily with young children, who are not yet able to verbally express experiences and attitudes. For instance, Grimm (1999) describes measurement of a baby's reaction to audiovisual stimuli by evaluating sucking behavior with specially designed dummies that constantly measure sucking intensity. Such results can be analyzed later on with respect to the stimulus presentation. Another research area involves topics linked with social taboos that provoke socially acceptable answers; studies focusing on violence or pornography, for example, might use physiological measurements.

Experiments try to control all the variables that influence children's media actions, with the goal of

revealing the influence/impact of media supply, social settings, the perception situation, and sociodemographic factors. Nevertheless, classic sociological experiments are often criticized for having little ecological validity; in other words, results from a lab situation may not be transferable to everyday life. Research trials in the field of qualitative research on children and the media should take place in contexts that are as natural as possible, and variations should be of an everyday nature. The field of child media research looks primarily at cognitive aspects; an example is Troseth's 1999 study, which investigated whether 2-year-olds profited from video sequences in a real-life orientation task.

Studies concerning interaction patterns, for instance, with computer games, and their new meaning in relation to children's use call for innovations in research. Process- and situation-centered methods must be combined to measure cognitive processes during media use. Methodological suggestions and comments on available procedures can be found in studies on selective use of television and in research papers on the perception of online offers. An important method in this context is thinking aloud, a specific form of asking questions in order to evaluate orientation and decision tasks during the viewing of media. A combination of various procedures can be used in this context. For instance, Bucher and Barth (1998) combined observation (video recording) of the subjects, screen recording, and thinking aloud in their experimental study of perception patterns during online communication.

Screen- and video recording seem adequate methods to monitor the behavior of children when they work with interactive elements of computer programs, allowing for an analysis of decision tasks, possible options, and the final decision. Aufenanger (2003) pointed out that this method is able to record children's navigation in hypermedia and their commentaries as well. For school-age children, the main thread interview (in this case without a hand puppet), the group interview, group discussion (for those who are already able to take another's perspective), and participant observation seem suitable methods. Children 6 years of age and older also qualify for representative or standardized questionnaires as they are already literate. However, children up to the age of 10 years have to be assisted with questionnaires, or the questions must be asked verbally and the questionnaire filled in for them. Besides the questionnaire, a combination of concepts, self-assessment, protocol, or notes may prove useful.

Young children are not yet adjusted to temporal aspects of the world, and their animistic-anthropomorphic way of thinking is influenced strongly by momentary desires. Their ability to distinguish between fiction and reality is still based on unspecified ideas. To maintain a comprehensive concept of the world, main thread interviews and representative/standardized interviews with their parents and teachers are advisable. An advantage of involving parents and teachers in the field of child media research is that the respective educational concept receives a central importance. The attitudes of parents and teachers also influence the children's interactive competence.

Future research should not simply embark on the quest for effective methods because their usefulness depends on being seriously grounded in theory. For instance, Valkenburg suggests more elaborated theoretical models, in which child factors (e.g., developmental level, intelligence) and different environmental agents (e.g., media exposure, family influences) all operate as interacting determinants of children's development creativity.

—Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink

See also Media Effects, History of Research on; Research Methods (various entries)

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RESEARCH METHODS, CONTENT ANALYSES

The method of content analysis extends back into the 18th century, when the method of counting words in hymns and sermons was used to uncover heresy. It has since been used for a variety of purposes. Historically, although content analysis is embedded in the social sciences, communications researchers have focused primarily on the manifest content of communications exchanges; these analyses typically have not been concerned with behaviors beyond those strictly related to message producing and handling. In terms of television, the primary purpose of content analysis has traditionally been to identify, document, and trace major dimensions of the programming. For example, researchers have assessed the nature and measured the extent of violent acts on broadcast television programs. Content analysis has been used to measure and assess content of other types of media, such as newspapers, magazines, and, more recently, video games and the Internet. Recently, data gathered through content analyses have also been used in combination with other data, such as survey data, to relate content variables to other variables, such as personality characteristics, attitudes, and violent or sexual behaviors.

The major steps of a content analysis involve identifying the variables to be counted (e.g., physical violence against women), determining the unit of analysis (e.g., per hour or scene, page, song, or game level), deciding on a sample and sampling procedure (e.g., one week of prime-time television or one Internet site), training coders and assessing reliability (i.e., via percentage agreement or kappa calculation), and coding the sample. The process can be complex; variables and units of analysis must be well-defined to achieve acceptable reliability among coders—something as simple as counting the number of red shirts in a single television program can be surprisingly difficult (e.g., is a tank top a shirt? Where is the line between maroon and red? If the shirt is on a chair, but not presently being worn, should it still be counted?). Reliability and validity are important aspects of content coding. Researchers juggle defining a variable narrowly enough that coders will consistently make the same judgments about the material (i.e., be reliable) and making sure that the broader viewing audience would be likely to interpret the data in the same manner (i.e., be valid).

As a research method, a content analysis can evolve according to the complexity of research questions. Some analyses have now begun to include contextual elements surrounding the depiction or activity in question as a way to explore whether certain attributes of the message tend to be more meaningful to viewers than others. Other studies grapple with more philosophical concerns, such as how to accurately consider the ways individual interpretations of the material in question may vary by age, class, gender, or culture. Because the process involves counting, content analyses are most often regarded as a quantitative research method; however, content analysis is also closely associated with qualitative research, particularly narrative methods.

—C. Lynn Sorsoli

See also Food Advertising, Content in; Media Effects, History of Research on; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of

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RESEARCH METHODS, ETHICAL ISSUES IN

All research involves a wide range of ethical issues, which have to be taken into account at every stage of the research process. These concern not only specific issues related to young participants, such as ensuring their privacy, but also issues related to the methods used to gain access to the data or field, the quality of the collected material (e.g., how questions are worded), and the later analysis. Five main issues are often examined in the literature on ethics and research: the aspects of power, informed consent and choice, confidentiality, independence, and the reporting and disseminating of findings. All these issues are also crucial when conducting research online, for example, via email interviews or observations; this type of research also raises additional ethical challenges.

In research, the issue of power is always present, and this becomes even more evident when conducting research with children. The adult researcher may be perceived as an authority figure whose viewpoints dominate the research situation. Informed consent means that all participants, whatever their age, must be informed about and understand the purpose of the study, what their role is, and how the collected data will be used and presented. In addition, participants should always have the choice of withdrawing from a study anytime during the research process. However, it is not enough just to inform children that their participation is voluntary. Every researcher must reflect on whether the child actually has the opportunity to say no to a teacher or an adult researcher and is not feeling parental or peer pressure. For example, is a lack of motivation to participate an indication of unwillingness to take part in a study? The third issue, confidentiality, involves concealing the young informant's identity. Children's rights to privacy and confidentiality must be taken into account when, for example, presenting the results and deciding where the data are to be stored. The fourth question requires that researchers address the ethics of funding and consider the independence of a study from commercial business and other nonacademic interests. In this connection, the question of when and if the young participants should get some sort of reward for taking part in a study must be answered. Payments can be used as a tool for persuasion and thereby pressure the child to participate. As for reporting and disseminating the findings, several ethical issues are encountered including the possibility of giving personal feedback to the participants and whether they will be able to comment on the findings. Additional aspects to be examined are in what forums the findings are published and whether conclusions are based on the collected data or merely supporting the researcher's views.

—Ulrika Sjöberg

See also Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Effects, Models of; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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RESEARCH METHODS, ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is a research method that stresses direct observation of people in typical social environments.

Its goal is to build a detailed, holistic description of individuals' behaviors, attitudes, and interpretations of other people. This is done by joining a group under study as a participating member, often for weeks or months. Thus, the researcher gathers information on the group's activities (e.g., television viewing in a typical family's home) within the context of day-to-day living. A second goal of ethnography is to present the group's experiences in their own words and images. Usually, the ethnographer is not an original member of the group, so he or she must bridge the barriers against constructing this insider's perspective. This means that the language, routines, and cultural values of the group must be described in detail by a virtual stranger.

A few researchers have applied the ethnographic method to studies of media and children's daily lives. Two studies, one by Jennifer Bryce and Hope Leichter and one by Amy Jordan, used ethnographic methods to study family media use. Their studies showed that families operate as a system of interrelated components (e.g., parents, children, home organization, media) that create daily routines and a shared sense of reality. The researchers showed that families' media use reflected their attitudes about the use of time. Middle- and upper-class families defined time as a precious resource. Rules for watching television were reflected by pointing out "good" and "bad" uses of time. Jordan revealed that media were often used to punctuate parts of the day, initiating or ending the family's various routines. One example was the use of electronic tapes and books at bedtime to console children and help them sleep.

Other proponents argue that ethnography's strengths lie in the unstructured nature of observations, permitting researchers to show family life (and media's place in it) as it is lived. This can be as simple as tracking media use in the home or as complex as exploring the way the people's interpretations of media content show up in their ideas about "normal" family life. Ideally, the result is a realistic picture of media and social life. However, it is hard to get people to consent to participate in ethnographies. Once the ethnographer is admitted to the group, it is hard to know if what he or she sees is "real" and not altered for appearance's sake. This complicates the goal of faithfully describing media's role in daily life. Furthermore, ethnographers looking so closely at these activities can sometimes overlook broader social forces that shape them (e.g., media corporations' influence on available media choices).

—Ron Warren

See also Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Effects, Models of

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RESEARCH METHODS, EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

Experiments test the causal relationship between at least one factor (or independent variable) and at least one potentially affected (dependent) variable. Like experiments in the natural sciences, experiments in the social sciences and in media research rely on the comparison of outcomes that follow from different starting conditions. These starting conditions constitute the experimental treatment and are designed to differ from each other in a systematic fashion and only in respect to the independent variable, whose impact on the dependent variables is to be assessed. Participants (e.g., media users) are confronted with these differing starting conditions, and one or several empirical methods are used to measure the dependent variables (e.g., questionnaires, observational methods, physiological measures). These data are then compared between participants who were exposed to different starting conditions. Substantial (i.e., statistically significant) differences in the dependent variables represent empirical evidence for a causal effect of the independent variable on the dependent measures. Alternative explanations for group differences in the dependent measures (e.g., gender, age, media literacy) are ruled out because participants are randomly assigned to starting conditions. This randomization is expected to form groups that are (in average values) very similar (or, given a sufficient number of individuals per group, equal) to each other. Therefore, alternative explanations for differences in the dependent variables cannot be valid because in the ideal case, any conceivable alternative factor is distributed identically across experimental conditions.

EXAMPLE: EFFECTS OF VIDEO GAMES

In research on adolescents and the media, the impact of violent media on aggression is frequently tested experimentally. Bushman and Anderson (2002) randomly assigned their participants to play either a violent video game or a nonviolent game for 20 minutes (experimental treatment). Subsequently, the participants were asked to read three stories that included a potential interpersonal conflict and were required to write down a completion for each story, addressing the actions, thoughts, and feelings of the protagonists. After the experiment, trained coders went through the participants' writings and counted the number of aggressive actions, thoughts, and feelings that were mentioned. This number reflects the salience of aggression in the participants' mind at the time they wrote the texts (i.e., immediately after the experimental treatment). Players of a violent video game produced more aggressive story elements than players of a nonviolent game, which the authors regard as experimental demonstration of the causal relationship between game violence and aggressive thinking (as a component of aggressive behavior tendencies).

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Experiments are the best choice to test short-term causal effects in media research. Careful planning is needed, however, to create methodologically sound experimental designs that are in line with one's theoretical assumptions. Video games, for instance, are interactive and—in contrast to films—open to participants' individual modifications, which is a potential problem for valid experimentation. Other limitations have to be kept in mind as well (e.g., differences between experimental laboratories and real life; neglected long-term effects); combining experiments with other approaches (e.g., panel studies) may amplify the evidence for theoretical assumptions.

—Christoph Klimmt

See also Aggression, Television and; Electronic Games, Cognitive Effects of; Electronic Games, Violence in; General Aggression Model (GAM); Media Effects; Media Effects, History of Research on; Research Methods (various entries); Social Learning Theory/Social Cognitive Theory; Violence, Experimental Studies of

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RESEARCH METHODS, FIELD STUDIES

Field studies refer to studies that are conducted in a natural setting such as school, home, or play area. The use of field studies is especially seen in two traditions of media research. The first focuses on media effects by, for example, observing whether viewing of violent contents encourages aggressive modes of behavior. The second tradition is that of cultural studies, in which field studies are conducted to examine such topics as the way media are used and embedded in various social and cultural contexts in people's daily life.

Television has received the most attention in field studies conducted on children's use of media. Besides the effects of television on aggressive behavior, as well as the effects of advertising, the main focus has been on how young viewers interact with (e.g., emotionally) and interpret TV programs, usually applying a cognitive-developmental perspective, and on their social uses of television. In an example of such research, Tannis MacBeth Williams and colleagues studied the effects of television in a Canadian town before and after TV arrived in the households. The researchers observed an increased number of aggressive acts by second graders in classrooms and on the playground.

The work of Michelle A. Wolf in the United States examines how younger children (4 to 12 years old)

make sense of television programs by observing and interviewing the children and by letting them produce their own television programs at a day-care/summer camp facility. Several aspects are discussed, including the influence of personality on content preferences, children's ability to distinguish between reality and fiction, and their understanding of television's narrative conventions. Another study on television has been conducted by the Australian researcher Patricia Palmer, who analyzed younger children's (8 to 9 and 11 to 12 years old) relationship with television in their homes, using interviews, drawings, observations, and surveys. The project looks at how television content is discussed and defined by children (taking into account age and gender), what they actually do in front of the TV set, and the social uses of television within the family and among friends. A more recent field study has been done by Danish media researcher Jesper Olesen, who observed and compared children's (10 to 12 years old) use of television and video with the family and peers at home. The study shows how the two types of viewing contexts influence the child's viewer position. Children are regarded as experienced viewers when watching with friends, but different rules apply in the family, where the child is assigned a subordinate position as adults evaluate the child's experience in terms of age and developmental stage.

Although the most common methods used in field studies are observations, interviews, and field notes, changing perspectives in child and childhood research have evolved recently, with implications for the methods used in field studies. Children today are seen as reliable informants of their own experiences. The need to perceive young people as active researchers is also stressed in terms of, for example, having a say in the nature and focus of research. By, for instance, providing children with different visual means in research, such as video cameras, new opportunities are given to the children to construct visual representations of their lives, and new types of knowledge result.

—Ulrika Sjöberg

See also Media Effects; Notel, Unitel, Multitel Study; Research Methods, Ethnography; Research Methods, Natural Experiments

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RESEARCH METHODS, LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Longitudinal studies examine change over time. Studies that measure the *same* people, organizations, media, or other entity repeatedly over time are longitudinal, such as a study of the same children who are sixth graders this year and were fifth graders last year. Studies that measure *new* individuals or entities at different time points are cross-sectional, for example, a study of this year's sixth graders compared to last year's sixth graders.

How change occurs over time is critical to many theories and questions regarding children, adolescents, and the media. Taking a developmental perspective involves noting how the children change over time in their relationship with the media. For example, as children age, how do their reactions to violent movies change?

Theories that aim to explain processes or understand causality also benefit from attempting to model how the process changes over time. Take, for example, the question of whether exposure to risky sex in media portrayals affects the likelihood of teens engaging in risky sex. If a researcher collects data at one time point and finds a correlation between media exposure and risky sex behavior, the process is unclear. Did exposure to risky sex portrayals lead adolescents to model that behavior? Or, did a propensity to engage in risky sex lead teens to seek out media likely to contain sexual content? With longitudinal data, it may be possible to test both hypotheses to see which explanation best fits the data.

To conduct a longitudinal analysis, a researcher needs at least two waves or rounds of data; four or more are better for understanding the process of

change. The data could be generated from, for example, repeated observations, surveys, physiological measures, or analyses of media content over time.

Longitudinal studies also require a measure of time that makes sense in the context of the study, such as seconds, weeks, years, sessions, age, or grade. It is important is to measure around the time when the researcher expects change to be detectable. Some analysis methods require the same time interval between measurements (e.g., every 3 months). Other methods allow unique intervals per person, such as the time elapsed since each child's natural exposure to a media message. Some methods also allow explanatory variables to vary over time.

There have been advances recently in the methods available to analyze longitudinal data and the statistical packages that include those techniques. Multilevel modeling can examine simultaneously the predictors for change over time within individuals, differences between individuals, and differences in groupings of individuals. For example, a national study examined the effects of alcohol advertising exposure over time, individual characteristics, and levels of alcohol advertising present in each market to understand which factors contributed to drinking over time. Another analysis method is event history analysis (also known as survival analysis and failure rate analysis), which examines when specific events occur to individuals and what predicts them. For example, when do youth begin and subsequently cease complying with a campaign message?

—Leslie Snyder

See also Media Effects, History of Research on

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RESEARCH METHODS, META-ANALYSES

Meta-analysis, also known as research synthesis, is a quantitative technique used to analyze the research literature in a particular domain. Although the goals are similar to a qualitative literature review, meta-analyses use established procedures to search, code, and quantitatively analyze all of the relevant studies. For example, Anderson has used meta-analyses to examine the effects of violent video games on children by coding and analyzing all published research studies to date that test the impact violent video games.

VALUE OF META-ANALYSIS

Syntheses of the research evidence are useful for a number of reasons. Meta-analyses can answer research questions in a more reliable manner than basing an answer on any one study. Given that every study has flaws and that the particular flaws are different for different studies, looking at the entire body of work avoids the biases in any single study.

In addition, meta-analysis avoids researcher biases that may affect qualitative literature reviews. It is particularly useful when there is a large body of research addressing a particular question or theoretical relationship. Research syntheses may uncover patterns of findings—when relationships are stronger and when they are weaker—that have not been discussed in prior reviews or remain controversial. For example, a meta-analysis by Groesz, Levine, and Murnen of the effect of experimental exposure to thin media images on body satisfaction found small differences between girls and women under 19 and those over 19, but a greater effect among girls and women with a history of body image problems or who scored high on body dissatisfaction prior to the experimental exposure.

Meta-analysis also focuses attention on the size and direction of effects, rather than statistical significance. Understanding the size of an effect may impact theory, inform public policies, be used to set realistic goals for applied programs, provide a benchmark for the evaluation of future programs, and inform the number of research participants needed in future studies. For example, the results of a study by Anderson in which the average effect of violent video games on aggressive behavior was $r = .26$, coupled with the amount of violent game playing that is taking place, suggest an urgent need to inform the public about the impact of such games. In the Groesz et al. study, the average effect size of experimental exposure to thin body-ideal media images on body satisfaction was $r = .15$, supporting the theory that television and fashion magazines promote a standard of beauty that leads many people to feel bad about their bodies and suggesting a need to develop effective media literacy programs to reduce the impact of such exposure.

Finally, meta-analyses are useful in identifying the methodological shortcomings present in a research area. Often, theoretically relevant studies fail to report adequately the statistics necessary for meta-analyses. Sometimes, the research synthesis points to a need to use a different type of study design to triangulate an answer to a research question. Anderson's violent video game meta-analysis concluded that there is a strong need for longitudinal studies in the area to complement the existing experiments and correlational studies.

DESIGN OF A META-ANALYSIS

The first step in conducting a meta-analysis is to design the study. What is the research question? What systematic procedure will be used to search for relevant studies? This may include searching particular electronic databases, using reference sections of other articles, and contacting researchers in a professional organization. What criteria will be used for deciding which studies are relevant? This typically involves inclusion of key variables, reporting of key statistical information, and study design criteria. The research team must also design the codebook and coding sheet. The second step is to conduct the search and gather the relevant studies. Next, one codes the accumulated studies, using a content analysis procedure. Finally, the data are analyzed. The effect sizes reported in the studies need to be converted into a common statistic, such as d or r; meta-analysis books provide summaries of common conversion formulas.

Meta-analyses are applicable only to the quantitative studies in an area. The approach does not take into account theoretical papers or qualitative studies. To be included, studies need to report the effects for the same constructs and relationships.

—Leslie Snyder

See also Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Electronic Games, Effects of; Electronic Games, Violence in; Media Effects, History of Research on; Media Effects, Models of

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RESEARCH METHODS, NATURAL EXPERIMENTS

When researchers want to document some aspect of media effects, their goal is to determine whether there is a causal relationship between media use and users' responses or behavior. The design of the research is crucial in determining whether causal inferences can be made. In their classic monograph and its more recent revisions, Campbell and his colleagues explained the distinction between *true* or *randomized* experiments and *quasi-experiments,* including both *natural experiments,* which are the focus of this entry, and *field experiments.*

In true experiments, which are usually conducted in laboratory rather than real-world settings, participants are randomly assigned to the various treatment group conditions, so causal inferences about the treatment effects *can* be made. But it is rarely possible for the researchers to manipulate more than a few independent variables relevant to the potential cause-effect relationship of interest, so true randomized experiments usually test hypotheses about the independent and interactive effects of only a small number of manipulated variables. Therefore, they cannot answer the question of whether the potential causal effect occurs under real-life conditions involving many more relevant factors. Depending on the research methods used to study natural experiments, one of their strengths is that they may be able to answer both the *can* (causal influence) and the *does* (real-life) ecological validity questions regarding media effects.

WHAT IS A NATURAL EXPERIMENT?

In natural experiments, which are sometimes called *found* experiments, researchers do not manipulate the group differences they study. Instead, they take advantage of a naturally occurring change to assess its effects. For example, a preexisting group with access

to some form of media (e.g., television, Internet, mobile phone) may be compared with another preexisting group without similar access. Or a preexisting group may be studied before a medium (e.g., television reception) first becomes available and then again after some period of use. Ideally, this group experiencing change in access to the medium of interest will be contrasted with other similar (control) groups whose exposure did not change over the same interval, in a "before and after" study.

CAUSAL INFERENCES IN NATURAL EXPERIMENTS

The first condition for making a causal inference, the knowledge that the media cause preceded its effect in time, is usually easily met in natural experiments. This timing difference is probably what interested the researchers in studying the situation.

The second condition for causal inference is that the media exposure (treatment condition) and its effect on users (e.g., on their school achievement, or aggression) must covary. This is usually measured statistically, but statistical errors sometimes occur. For example, there may be a difference in the study's sample that does not exist in the population it represents (often described as a Type I error), or conversely, the statistics used may fail to detect in the sample a true pattern of covariation that does exist in the population (Type II error). Or if there is enough statistical power in a very large sample, then a trivial relationship that is not important either for policy or for theoretical reasons may nevertheless be statistically significant. These three potential false conclusions about covariation include six threats to statistical conclusion validity identified by Cook and colleagues in 1990 and described in detail by MacBeth (1998) in relation to quasi-experiments on the effects of television. One of these six threats, the reliability of measures, applies in natural media experiments primarily to measures of the possible media effects. It applies much less to the measures of media use because one of the advantages of natural experiments is that media exposure is specified as part of the design (e.g., presence versus absence of television or some other medium).

The third necessary condition for making causal inferences in natural experiments is that there are no plausible alternative explanations for the effects, for example, on aggressive behavior, other than the impact of the medium. Cook et al. described the following nine possible alternative, third-variable explanations, or threats to internal validity. The relationship between the presumed media cause and its effect might instead be due to some other *historical* event that took place between the pretest and posttest. This could be either a general societal change affecting all of the groups, or a local historical change specific to one or more of the groups, or both. A presumed causal relationship might be due instead to participants becoming older, wiser, or changing in other ways (i.e., due to *maturation).* This can be addressed by studying more than one age level in each of the groups. If there are no age/school grade differences in all groups at both the pretest and posttest, then maturation can be ruled out as a cause of any other pre–post differences.

Testing effects due to acquiring test-specific knowledge or becoming "test-wise"—that is, better at doing the type of test or other measure of the possible media effect used in the study—also need to be considered. Pretest–posttest differences due to a *change in the measuring instrument* and *statistical regression toward the mean* are other alternative possible explanations (threats to internal validity) to consider and rule out, along with *selection.* This refers to the possibility that differences among the treatment conditions are due to different types of people in the group, that is, preexisting group differences. This is absolutely crucial in studies of new media, because their penetration into the population varies systematically with socioeconomic status (SES). New media are almost always acquired first by the better educated and more affluent, and such families also vary systematically in other ways (e.g., interests, work, leisure activities, attitudes) from less well-educated or affluent families. Having pretest measures is essential for ruling out the problem of selection. They enable researchers to assess whether the groups in the natural experiment differ at the pretest, not only in demographic variables such as SES but also in the behaviors of special interest (e.g., school achievement, aggression).

Whenever the same individuals are studied longitudinally, that is, on two or more occasions, there is some attrition, or dropout, between the first and subsequent points of data collection. This internal threat to validity of *mortality* should ideally be low, and similarly low for all of the groups in the study. *Interactions with selection* may also occur, for example, selection–maturation, in which the groups may contain different types of people (e.g., varying in SES) who may mature at different rates in the behavior of

interest (e.g., school achievement). Finally, there may be *ambiguity about the direction of causal influence*, but as was noted earlier, this is more likely to be true for correlational studies and is not usually a problem with quasi-experiments.

When all nine alternative plausible explanations of the effects can be ruled out as threats to the internal validity of the natural or other quasi-experiment, then the relationships can be assumed to be causal.

Researchers studying natural experiments also must be concerned with threats to *construct validity,* that is, alternative interpretations of the measures and manipulations. For research on media effects, this involves being sure that the behavior studied (e.g., aggression) is not really something else (e.g., rough-and-tumble play) and that media exposure is as purported. MacBeth discusses Cook et al.'s 11 possible threats to construct validity in relation to the design of natural experiments regarding media effects (especially TV).

Finally, media researchers studying natural experiments must be concerned about *external validity,* that is, the extent to which the findings obtained for their samples can be generalized to other times, places, and people. Cook et al. lists five such threats, which MacBeth (1998) discusses in relation to natural experiments on TV effects, along with the techniques suggested by Cook et al. for increasing external validity.

Of the four categories of concern, internal and statistical conclusion validity are similar in promoting causal relationships, whereas construct and external validity are similar in dealing with generalization from causal relationships. Cook et al. emphasizes (a) that trade-offs among the four are inevitable, (b) that internal validity is most important for making causal inferences, and (c) that this is best accomplished in natural and other quasi-experiments through research design rather than statistical adjustments.

DESIGNS OF MEDIA NATURAL EXPERIMENTS

Cook et al. (1990) describes four designs of natural experiments, discussed by MacBeth in relation to media research focusing on television. The first three types of design—one-group posttest design, one-group pretest–posttest design, and posttest-only design with nonequivalent groups—do not usually permit causal inferences. The fourth design, untreated control group designs with pretests, involves both pretests and posttests for nonequivalent control groups as well as for the group that is the focus of the natural media experiment. This design usually does produce interpretable causal results.

—Tannis M. MacBeth

See also Natural Experiments (various entries); Notel, Unitel, Multitel Study

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RESEARCH METHODS, QUALITATIVE

Qualitative research methods, in the realm of social sciences, are research methods that are usually but not exclusively employed to understand people's context-mediated behaviors and cognitions through the generation of descriptive data. Furthermore, a major goal of qualitative research methodology is to understand how the research participants make meaning of themselves or the phenomenon being researched. In addition, qualitative research methods are characterized by a distinct set of data collection and analytical tools that are aimed at understanding the experiences of research participants by focusing on their words and by observing their actions in the natural setting.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The choice to employ qualitative research methods is governed by the type of research question that the researcher is attempting to answer. Unlike quantitative research methods, where researchers are looking for

variance or correlations between variables or specific phenomena, researchers using qualitative methods usually are more interested in understanding the processes behind a phenomenon. An example of a research question that is best suited to qualitative research methods is, “How do adolescents decide what clothes to purchase for school?”

DATA COLLECTION

The two major forms of data collection employed by qualitative methodologists are interviews and observations in context. Interviews, usually intended to help the researcher understand how participants derive meaning from a phenomenon by listening to or reading their words, are conducted by the researcher administering an interview protocol consisting of a group of questions geared toward answering a research question. A structured interview protocol, where all participants are given the opportunity to answer the exact same question, gives the researcher the opportunity to compare the phenomenon and generalize across all participants. Semistructured or unstructured interview protocols are geared toward research intended to examine how individual participants make meaning of a phenomenon in the distinct context in which they find themselves. The other major form of data collection in qualitative methodology, observation in context, is also used to understand how participants derive meaning from a phenomenon. Furthermore, observations (like interviews) are also intended to serve as descriptions of the behaviors and actions that are associated with the phenomenon. Interviews and observations can be used exclusively or collaboratively to help the researcher best answer the research question.

DATA ANALYSIS

A number of analytical strategies are associated with qualitative methods, including case studies, portraiture, and discourse analysis. Different strategies are more or less appropriate depending on the research questions and research purposes; however, all involve culling the data and extracting major themes from it. Some researchers have preexisting themes in mind, based on prior research, when they inspect the collected data. Other researchers choose to let the themes emerge from the observation or interview data they have collected. The key feature of such analysis is that the themes are inextricably linked to specific data sources (i.e., excerpts of interview transcripts or observation notes).

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND YOUTH

The value of qualitative research methods in research on youth is their success in helping adult researchers both understand and display the meaning youth make about their experiences in school or their choices in engaging media. For example, Jane Brown and colleagues have used qualitative approaches to understand the ways in which adolescents incorporate media into everyday life. Assuming that the artifacts that a teen uses to decorate a bedroom reflect the personal factors of importance to the occupant, Brown uses the “room touring” method to learn the place of media. The teen describes the contents of the bedroom while the peer or media interviewer asks the teen why the various artifacts are included and what are their sources. These qualitative procedures have allowed exploration of the influence of media on sexuality in teens and the role of media in identity formation.

—Daren A. Graves

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Electronic Media, Children’s Use of; Internet Use, Social; Media, Meanings of; Research Methods, Room Touring

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RESEARCH METHODS, QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS

The survey is one of the most widely used methods of media research because it is flexible, can be relatively inexpensive, and can be used to gather a lot of information from a broad array of people in a short period. Surveys are used both to describe current patterns of behavior (e.g., frequency of television viewing, favorite television shows) and to examine relationships between variables (e.g., TV viewing and violent

behavior). It is more difficult to establish causal relationships between variables with surveys than it is with experiments because surveys conducted at one time point (cross-sectional) cannot establish time order or control for all possible alternative explanations.

Five kinds of surveys are used frequently in both academic and media market research: mail, Internet, telephone, personal (face-to-face) interview, and group administration. Each kind of survey has advantages and disadvantages in terms of cost, amount and kind of information that can be gathered, potential interviewer bias, and response rates.

Surveys sent in the mail and over the Internet are least expensive and can cover wide geographic areas. Response rates (the percentage of eligible respondents who complete the questionnaire) typically are low, however, unless incentives and follow-up mailings are included. Because no interviewer is present, it is also difficult to know if the target respondent was actually the one who completed the questionnaire.

Surveys conducted over the telephone are also relatively inexpensive, but response rates are dropping as people grow wary of marketing calls disguised as survey research. Personal interviews conducted in respondents' homes are the most expensive survey method in terms of both time and money, but the flexibility of the interview is increased, along with the number and sensitivity of questions that can be asked. The potential for interviewer bias in face-to-face interviews can be reduced by having respondents complete the entire questionnaire or the most sensitive parts on a portable computer after the interviewer has introduced them to the study (this is called computer-assisted personal interviewing).

Group administration of questionnaires in work settings or school classrooms can be an efficient way to gather information if random samples are not required. Response rates typically are high, and more questions can be asked than in a mail or telephone survey. It may be difficult to control interaction among respondents in such a situation, however, which could introduce bias.

Survey researchers take special care in constructing questions and ordering them in the questionnaire so respondents can answer easily and not be influenced by preceding questions. Effective questionnaires include short, persuasive introductions and clear instructions for each question. Pretests are often conducted to make sure that each question in the questionnaire is relevant to the respondents and the project's goals. Good questions are simple and short, minimize the respondent's impulse to answer in a socially desirable way (e.g., reporting they watch public television more than they actually do), and ask for information that the respondent is capable of providing (e.g., number of hours spent watching television yesterday rather than over the past month).

—Jane D. Brown

See also Research Methods, Qualitative

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RESEARCH METHODS, ROOM TOURING

Room touring is a qualitative research method developed to learn more about how adolescents use media in their everyday lives, especially in their own bedrooms. In a room tour, the adolescent takes the interviewer on a tour of his or her bedroom, pointing out visual images and objects, including media, and discussing their personal significance and use.

The technique draws on the idea that an adolescent's bedroom can play an important role in the process of self-definition and that media materials are often used in the process. Research in the 1980s found that American adolescents spent almost 13% of their awake time in their bedrooms and often used media as a way to learn more about themselves and to regulate their moods. Later, in the 1990s, national surveys found that adolescents' bedrooms had become little media centers equipped with many kinds of media, including music systems, televisions, and computers hooked up to the Internet.

Jane Brown and her students conducted a series of small studies with adolescents in which room touring was one of the methods used to learn about the media's role in adolescents' identity development. The researchers found that for many teens, the bedroom is a safe, private space in which experimentation with possible selves can be conducted. In one study,

girls reported often bringing their friends to their rooms to talk, to read magazines, and to listen to music. One 15-year-old said, "My room's like my personal place. It's what I want it to be . . . I can just make it like me."

Brown and her colleagues concluded that tours of an adolescent's bedroom can suggest the complexity of a teen's identity structure and approach to the world as well as which sources of influence, including mass media, are important in the teen's life and construction of self. In some of their studies, they took still pictures or videotaped the walls of the rooms as the adolescent commented into a handheld tape recorder. They described one boy's room:

> Jack, an African American, explained the mélange of pictures of both Black and White girls that adorned his walls: "If they look good I just put them up on the wall." The young women . . . were interspersed with pictures of GI Joe (drawings done when he was 10 or 11 years old and "GI-Joe crazy"), a drawing of *Lady and the Tramp* ("I just seen that in a magazine and I drew it."), and a *Star Wars* drawing. (Brown et al., 1994, p. 818)

Other images included a picture of Arsenio Hall (because "he dresses") and labels from brand-name clothing.

One challenge of room touring is categorizing the vast array of images and artifacts in the room. Brown et al. concluded that most of what they saw could be grouped into one of six categories: (1) appropriation (using a cultural image in a personal way, e.g., as Jack had when he drew his own images from popular movies); (2) social connections (maintaining ties with a loved one, e.g., pictures of relatives or friends); (3) fantasy (imagining being someone or with someone, e.g., Jack fantasizing about magazine models); (4) social differentiation/integration (being different from or similar to someone, e.g., Jack emulating Arsenio Hall's style); (5) personal art; and (6) bricolage (compilations of disparate images and items).

—Jane D. Brown

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Bedrooms, Media Use in; Cultural Identity

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SCHEMA THEORY

Schema theory states that the human mind is organized by a series of stable processing tools, known as schemas. A schema consists of generalized knowledge about a particular topic and the associations among that topic and other relevant information. For example, a gender schema refers to the general knowledge that an individual has about the meaning of being male or female. Consider a person who believes that men are more commonly doctors, whereas women are nurses; men are aggressive, whereas women are nurturing; and men like to go hunting, whereas women like to go shopping. All of these pieces of information, along with their associations with various domains of life, create a general picture of what this individual thinks about men and women. This general picture forms what is known as a schema: a cognitive structure that serves as a framework for understanding all information that is relevant to gender.

It is important to consider how the media influence the development of schemas, especially for children and adolescents. Schemas are thought to be formed by repeated exposure to consistent information. Applying this idea to media research, researchers have studied how media exposure affects the formation of schemas. Given the increasing amount of media exposure among children and adolescents, schema theory can play an important role in understanding the impact of media on youth. For example, individuals who view large amounts of television programming that contains frequent messages that are consistent with traditional gender stereotypes are more likely to form a gender schema that contains these stereotypes.

Schemas serve as a shortcut during the processing of information. Schemas guide *attention* by orienting individuals toward information that is relevant to them; *processing*, by providing a framework for understanding information in a way that is consistent with prior beliefs; and *remembering*, by providing a link with information already stored in memory. These shortcuts can increase efficiency in the processing of information. However, schemas can also lead to biased processing. Studies have shown that individuals are more likely to remember something inaccurately if it is inconsistent with a preexisting schema. For example, the man with the gender schema described earlier may "remember" that his female acquaintance is a nurse when she is actually a doctor.

Individuals vary in the content of their schemas. For example, consider a person who believes that women are successful at a wide range of jobs and carry a lot of responsibility in society. These pieces of information feed into this individual's gender schema and create a very different framework for understanding information about gender than is accessible to a person with the gender schema described previously. Individuals also vary in the types of schemas that they create. For example, an individual who is interested in politics and pays a lot of attention to political information will create a political schema for organizing thoughts and information about politics. However, a person who is uninterested in politics will not create such a schema.

In addition to schemas about aspects of the world, individuals also form schemas for parts of their own self-concept, known as self-schemas. For example, a gender self-schema is a schema that organizes information about how gender matters to a person's life and identity. A woman who has a gender self-schema is more likely to believe that being female is an important determinant of the things she does and how she is treated than a woman without a gender self-schema. Self-schemas have been studied for various domains of self-concept, such as appearance, weight, and race.

Much research on how the media influence individuals' thoughts and emotions has focused on individual differences in how people process information relayed by the media. These individual differences are thought to be related to differences in schema type and content. For example, individuals with a well-developed schema for violence have been shown to perceive more violence in a television show than individuals without such a schema. In fact, perception of violence in a television show was demonstrated to relate more strongly to preexisting differences in schemas than to variability in how many violent acts were actually viewed. Individual differences in schemas have also explained how individuals respond to political advertisements. Researchers found that among individuals who have political schemas, some individuals focus more on political issues, whereas others focus more on the character of politicians. These preexisting schemas were shown to bias what individuals remembered after viewing the same political advertisements. Individuals with an issue schema were more likely to remember the issues discussed in the ad, whereas those with a character schema were more likely to remember the character traits that were portrayed.

The media are also thought to influence human thoughts and emotions by activating self-schemas. Much of this research has focused on self-schemas related to physical appearance. For example, it has been shown that young women who formed a self-schema for their appearance, especially one focused on the desire to achieve an idealized body image, became emotionally upset or anxious when they were exposed to information in the media that activated this ideal, such as super models in magazine ads or commercials. Women who did not have an appearance self-schema did not demonstrate this emotional arousal. Therefore, schemas are useful for explaining differences in how individuals respond to information in the media.

At noted above, exposure to repeated messages in the media may promote the development of certain schemas. Children and adolescents are considered to be particularly susceptible to the influence of the media on the development of their schemas, primarily because they have fewer life experiences to guide their schema formation and therefore are more open to the messages transmitted through the media. Researchers have found that active discussion with children about the messages in the media can serve to foster critical analysis of such messages, thereby blocking some of the effect of media messages on the formation of schemas.

—Daniel W. Brickman, Marjorie Rhodes, and Brad J. Bushman

See also Body Image in Girls and Young Women; Cognitive Development, Media and; Schema/Scripts, Aggressive; Schema/Scripts, Gender; Schema/Scripts, Sexual

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SCHEMAS/SCRIPTS, AGGRESSIVE

Despite plentiful evidence of a link between exposure to media violence and aggression, it is unclear what theoretical mechanism accounts most elegantly for the data. Although both physiologically based theories (e.g., excitation transfer) and predominantly cognitive theories have been supported, both offer a better explanation

for short-term increases in aggression than for the long-term effects that have been found. A cleaner and perhaps more intuitive explanation comes from the sociocognitive literature. Specifically, schemas, scripts, and mental models are frequently cited as a causal explanation for the link between exposure to media violence and increases in long-term aggression.

Overall, schema theory states that knowledge is organized around particular concepts. A schema contains the features or attributes that are associated with a category. For example, person schemas include information about people or categories of people that includes their skills, competencies, or values and perhaps exemplar members. Event schemas are processes, practices, or ways in which we typically approach tasks and problems. Role schemas contain sets of expectations, that is, how we expect an individual occupying a certain role to behave.

In the literature on mass media, emphasis is often placed on scripts, a specific type of schema that refers to our knowledge of how a sequence of events proceeds, or perhaps should proceed, including the behaviors and actions involved. One oft-cited example is the restaurant schema. A script for an event, for example, a conflict with a peer, can be acquired quite quickly. For example, preschoolers develop scripts surrounding social interaction even for behaviors that 3-year-olds don't engage in (e.g., alcohol use). In addition, young children can develop these scripts after only one exposure to information about the event. Last, children as young as 5 years of age tend to draw on their own existing mental scripts (e.g., a trip to McDonald's) in encoding and later recalling a story about a trip to McDonald's.

How is this related to media exposure and aggression? Children are thought to develop scripts quickly, especially when little competing information is available. In addition, repeat exposure to a depicted script may act as a reinforcement, making the script more robust, more easily accessible, and more readily activated. That is, if a child encounters a situation, say a conflict, for which he or she has a script available, the child may draw on that information to know what to do. The behaviors chosen and ultimately enacted may come from that script, and that script may have been established through exposure to conflicts in the mass media.

Mental models, another framework used to understand long-term increases in aggression after exposure to media violence, are perhaps the broadest term used to describe the conceptual architecture of the mind. Mental models are cognitive representations of events and situations, including the characters in those situations, the interrelations among the characters, the causal relationships between people and occurrences, and the sequence and timing of events. Mental models are, therefore, what we abstract from our experiences and store in memory as an example of some thing or some situation. Indeed, the abstraction moves beyond an exemplar and becomes, in our minds, the thing itself. Like scripts and schemas, this cognitive architecture is used to guide incoming information, to reason and problem-solve, and to assist in or direct recall.

In each case, the argument is made that through exposure to mediated models of aggression, viewers learn elaborated schemas, scripts, and mental models for aggression, including when to use them, how to enact them, and whether and under what circumstances they are right. In other words, viewers develop complex webs of imagery surrounding the construct of violence. The long-term effect of media exposure on aggression, then, is typically associated with the observational learning of schemas about aggression and scripts for problem solving that include aggression. The heavier the media usage, the more dense, complex, and easily activated the web.

Using these cognitive architectures as a theoretical framework, past media research has found a link between exposure to violent television and several outcomes associated with aggression. For example, Huesmann and Guerra found that children who watched more television violence were more likely to see aggression as normative than were those who did not watch as much violent television. Similarly, Krcmar and Curtis were interested in the effect of violent television on children's moral judgments about aggression. In this study, children ages 5 through 12 watched near-identical videos in which the main characters had a verbal conflict. The clip was then edited either to show the conflict coming to blows or to make it appear that the characters walked away from the conflict. Those who saw the physically violent version were more likely to use aggressive mental models later to judge an unrelated story involving aggression. Interestingly, however, 20% of the children in the control (i.e., nonviolent version) condition reported having seen punching and kicking in the stimulus tape. The authors concluded that children develop fairly ritualized models of cartoon violence that may have caused them to see violence even when it did not occur and to judge violence as more acceptable.

Schema theory has also been used to explain why exposure to television violence may be associated with less advanced moral reasoning. In a study by Krcmar and Valkenburg, the researchers found that children who watched more fantasy violence in series like *Superman, X Men*, and *Power Rangers* were more likely to judge justified violence in moral dilemmas as right. The authors argued that with a well-developed script for superhero and fantasy violence, one that would have developed through more exposure to cartoon violence, children would be more likely to perceive justified violence as correct. Because fantasy violence tends to portray violence as perpetrated by a hero for the greater good, it makes sense that heavy fantasy-violence viewers would agree with the idea that violence can be good when there appears to be a cause. Similarly, children who are exposed to media violence are more likely than their light-viewing counterparts to attribute hostility to others' actions.

Last, scripts and schema theory are used to explain the effect of exposure to media violence on behavioral aggression itself. For example, Huesmann argues that as children age, these initial scripts—acquired through exposure to real models in the form of family interactions or mediated models in the form of television violence—become more complex and also can be activated in a more automatic, less conscious way. This process results in increased aggression and also decreases their likelihood of filtering out inappropriate behavior such as aggression.

—Marina Krcmar

See also Aggression, Advertising and; Schema Theory; Violence, Effects of

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SCHEMAS/SCRIPTS, GENDER

According to gender schema theory, children's preexisting beliefs about men and women, or their gender schemas, shape their attention to novel and familiar stimuli, their interpretation of current situations, their memory of past events, and their decisions regarding their own behavior. Because media portrayals of gender and gender roles are often highly stereotypical, concern has been raised about the role of media exposure in children's development of stereotypical gender schemas. Empirical evidence suggests that exposure to stereotypical portrayals of men and women on television does in fact lead children and adolescents to adopt similarly stereotyped attitudes about gender.

Content analyses have documented the nature of media portrayals of men and women. Early studies focused on the mere presence of male and female characters, finding that male characters outnumbered female characters in most media genres, in many cases appearing twice as often as women. More recent research suggests that this bias toward male characters is gradually decreasing over time. Many researchers argue that content analyses must extend their focus beyond the mere presence of characters to consider the traits that are most frequently attributed to men and women and the occupations and roles that men and women are shown holding. These studies show that women are more often portrayed as deferent, weak, romantic, and emotional, whereas men are more often portrayed as active, aggressive, athletic, and intelligent. In addition, men are more frequently shown in positions of responsibility, as solving problems, expressing opinions, or rescuing other characters, whereas women are most frequently shown deferring to male characters. In terms of occupation, men are more likely than women to be portrayed as holding a high-status position, including those in science and technical fields. Many female characters on television are portrayed without any clear reference to their occupation; when a woman has a profession, it is often gender stereotyped, for example, teachers or secretaries.

These stereotypical portrayals generally extend across all media genres, including genres specifically targeted to young viewers. Content analyses have documented gender-stereotypical portrayals in magazines, movies, television programming and commercials, music videos and video games, picture books and educational software aimed at preschoolers, children's television, comics and cartoons, and award-winning children's literature. Although content analyses support an overwhelming bias toward stereotypical portrayals of gender, it must be noted that counter-stereotypical characters and programs can also be found in most of these genres as well. For example, the animated program *Rugrats*, a favorite among young children, includes among its characters fathers who are frequently verbally supportive and affectionate toward their children and a girl who frequently bosses, orders, and threatens her male peers. Similarly, although men are more frequently cast as scientists or engineers than women are, many contemporary movies showcase female scientists who are capable and hold high-status positions. Because of the presence of both stereotypical and counterstereotypical portrayals of gender, different children may be exposed to vastly different sets of gender schemas through their media use.

Media use has been linked to children's beliefs and attitudes about men and women and their choices for their own behaviors. Although associations have emerged with other genres (e.g., magazines and movies), the overwhelming majority of research in this area has been conducted with television. Among children and adolescents, frequent television viewing is associated with holding stereotypical beliefs about men and women, including what traits they demonstrate, what behaviors they are likely to enact, and what occupations they are likely to hold. Television viewing has also been linked to children's endorsement of stereotypical attitudes about what men and women *should* do. For example, in a noteworthy longitudinal study, Michael Morgan found that adolescent girls who watched more television showed an increase in their endorsement of sexist attitudes over a one-year time frame. In addition, television viewing has been linked to children's and adolescents' own occupational aspirations. Experimental studies lend support to correlational findings by documenting short-term effects of media exposure on gender-role beliefs, attitudes, and preferences.

Associations between media use and the development of gender schemas, however, may not be unilateral, and recent work has explored how effects might vary based on the ethnicity, gender, and developmental stage of the viewer or on the nature of the content being viewed. Recent research has replicated findings among diverse populations documenting associations with the gender-role attitudes specifically among Latina/o and African American youth. Although many studies report effects for both genders, several studies have documented stronger associations among girls. Developmental stage is also a critical factor in the development of gender schemas, and although minimal research has explicitly examined age effects, there is preliminary indication that developmental stage might moderate media effects on gender schemas. Specifically, children who had recently achieved gender constancy (the notion that *male* and *female* are permanent, unchangeable categories) were found to be more affected by stereotypical media portrayals than younger children. Similarly, adolescents who are constructing their identity and contemplating multiple selves might be especially susceptible to schemas about gender roles and occupations.

It also appears that different forms of media may differentially impact schema development. Considering the differential impact of different genres, one study found that adolescents' stereotypical attitudes about women and work were associated with their exposure to sports and action-adventure programming but not with exposure to other genres. In other cases, media use was actually associated with *less* stereotypical schemas. Specifically, exposure to counterstereotypical programming has been linked to endorsement of less stereotypical attitudes about gender.

Furthermore, adult intervention may have the potential to minimize the effects of exposure to stereotypical media. A recent experiment found that when adults criticized the stereotypical portrayals young children were watching on television, children subsequently adopted more flexible attitudes about gender roles.

—Deborah Schooler

See also Advertising, Gender and; Gender Roles (various entries); Magazines, Adolescent Boys'; Magazines, Adolescent Girls'; Schema Theory; Schemas/Scripts, Sexual; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of

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SCHEMAS/SCRIPTS, SEXUAL

Scripting theory posits that individuals use sets of ordering rules, called scripts, to interpret, predict, or produce the scenes around them. Sexual scripts, in particular, provide information about the appropriate sequences of events involved in sexual encounters, the prevalence of certain sexual behaviors among one's peers, or the expected roles of men and women in sexual situations. Media sources present a concentrated sample of sexual scripts, and accordingly, scripting theory is especially useful for examining media influences on the sexual socialization of children and adolescents. The sexual scripts presented are often contradictory in nature and frequently focus on *gendered* sexual roles. Recent correlational and experimental data suggest that exposure to scripted media content may influence adolescents to adopt scripted attitudes and beliefs.

Content analysis has been used to document the types of sexual scripts most prevalent in the mass media consumed by children and adolescents. Sex is frequently portrayed as recreational, involving passion, pleasure, and minimal risk. The television programs most watched by children and adolescents depict sex as a game and as a fun pleasurable activity for people of all ages. Contemporary women's magazines, a third of whose consumers are adolescents, portray sex as casual and fun, with both men and women cast as primarily sex-driven beings. Moreover, on both television and in magazines, sex is typically portrayed as risk free.

Genres targeted specifically to teens present a slightly different set of scripts. Scripts in teen-oriented genres are often more contradictory in nature, treating sexuality as ubiquitous and of central importance while simultaneously highlighting sexual risk and promoting abstinence. The television programs most highly rated among adolescents contain the most frequent references to sex. At the same time, programs featuring adolescent and college-age characters are the most likely to address sexual risk. Similarly, teen-oriented magazines, for example, *Seventeen*, convey the contradictory messages that girls should look sexy and attract sexual attention from boys but should refrain from engaging in sexual activity.

A large portion of sexual scripts deal with the different sexual roles of women/girls and men/boys. Beliefs about how men and boys should act include being actors and initiators in sexual relationships, seeing women as sexual objects, enhancing masculinity by pursuing sexual relationships, experiencing sexual feelings as uncontrollable, being demanding in sexual situations, not having homosexual feelings, and not becoming emotionally attached to women. Beliefs about how women and girls should act include being sexually passive, being physically attractive to interest men, being manipulative rather than direct, setting sexual limits, appearing sexually chaste, and not having sexual desire. Media representations of these gendered sexual scripts are plentiful. For example, music videos often feature one or two male performers, shown to be wealthy and powerful, surrounded by a mass of

scantily clad women who serve primarily as sexual objects. Video games present a similar set of gendered sexual scripts; men are depicted as active and violent agents, and women are depicted as sexual objects.

The repeated presentation of these specific messages about sexuality provides young viewers with scripts about the sequence of events in a sexual encounter, the roles of each partner in those encounters, and the expected consequences of sexual activity. In a cyclical process, available scripts can then be used by viewers to aid in interpreting media content. Although no such research has been conducted with youth samples, research with undergraduate women indicates that viewers use the scripts they have developed from prior media exposure to interpret novel ambiguous sexual situations. The majority of sexual references on television take the form of innuendo, and given their limited sexual experience, it is likely that young viewers will call on these scripts even more frequently than adults when interpreting sexual content.

Children and adolescents may also be using these scripts to interpret their real-life experiences. Survey research has documented associations between adolescent consumption of sexually explicit media and beliefs about the prevalence of certain sexual behaviors among other adolescents. For example, adolescent viewers of daytime talk shows and soap operas tend to overestimate the number of their peers who are sexually active. Beliefs about peer norms have been shown to be a reliable indicator of adolescent sexual behavior. Accordingly, adoption of beliefs that exaggerate the proportion of one's peers who are sexually active may partially account for associations between consumption of sexually explicit media and adolescent sexual behavior.

Recent research indicates that exposure to media saturated with traditional sexual scripts about men and women may contribute to adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviors. In a recent experiment, African American high school students who watched script-laden music videos subsequently reported more stereotyped attitudes about the sexual roles of men and women than students who watched videos that were less scripted. Survey research has further demonstrated associations between adolescents' regular viewing of scripts about male and female sexual roles and their sexual health outcomes, especially among girls. Specifically, girls who watched more television portraying men as sex-driven reported more sexual experiences and more vulnerability to sexual risk, whereas girls who watched more television featuring girls and women as sexual limit-setters reported fewer sexual experiences, less vulnerability to sexual risk, and more consistent condom use.

—Deborah Schooler

See also Schema Theory; Schemas/Scripts, Gender; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of

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SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN, IMPACT OF THE MEDIA ON

According to a recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, children between 8 and 18 years old are exposed to about 8½ hours of media daily, an increase of 1 hour from 1999. (Although *school-age* in this entry generally refers to children ages 6 to 12, the Kaiser Foundation study involved the broader age range.) Their exposure is actually packed into about 6½ hours a day, however, with the other hours accounted for by *media multitasking,* the use of several types of media simultaneously. The media involved in their daily consumption include books and magazines, radio, television, cable, computers, Internet access, music videos, video games, and handheld devices. Many children have quickly become accustomed to having pagers, cell phones, DVD and CD players, and MP3s as well. According to the Kaiser Foundation report, bedrooms are now actual media centers, with large numbers of children having TVs, video games, VCR or DVD players, computers, cable TV, radios, or MP3s in their bedrooms. Even more have at least one computer at home and Internet access, even if it is not in their bedrooms. Youngsters

communicate with peers through email, chat rooms, and instant messaging, and they surf the Internet, download music, and watch TV.

Significant benefits and positive outcomes are associated with this media exposure. Internet access can provide important and current information on a range of topics. In moderation, television viewing and computer use can complement and supplement what and how children typically learn in a classroom. The analytic and critical thinking skills developed in school can help them understand and assess TV content, and TV's appeal and capacity for conveying complex information visually in interesting and stimulating formats can supplement classroom learning. TV viewing and computer game-playing can be social activities, and electronic communication can increase contacts with friends and family members and meet many of the same needs that extended phone conversations did in the past. Ready access to music is enjoyable and relaxing.

Possible negative short-term and long-term effects, however, are also of concern. As children learn best through active involvement, social and verbal interactions, and experimenting, one concern is that much of children's media use is too passive and the activity is too one-way. There are concerns about the effects of heavy media use on children's physical health and well-being. Some worry that children who spend many hours in front of a screen, whether with the Internet, playing games, or watching television or music videos, are less likely to exercise and more likely to be less fit or even obese or to have more health problems than those children who spend fewer hours with media and who engage in other more varied and active pursuits. There is also a good deal of research to document media users' increased exposure to depictions of alcohol use, tobacco use, violence, casual sex, stereotyping, and other content that can affect and negatively influence their developing beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Heavy media use has also been associated with anxiety, sleep disruptions, poor school performance, isolation, and fear, as well as aggressive behavior.

Children who use these media constitute a heterogeneous group. Differences among media users such as age, gender, level and patterns of media use, motivation or purpose for media use, socioeconomic background, family makeup, cognitive ability, educational level, and past experiences significantly affect the potential short-term and long-term impact of their experiences with the media. In addition, there are also variations in the format and content of the media forms themselves and in the context in which media are used. Children can use various media alone, for example, or with peers or family. They can also use media in their own bedrooms or in a more public part of the house, and these different contexts further affect which media they use, how much time they spend with various media, and the content to which they are exposed. Finally, children use media for many different reasons at any given time, including information seeking, diversion, social interaction, mood management, and escape from difficult situations, all of which also affect the potential impact of the media. Interactions among all of these variables further complicate the picture.

There is also differential access to the media. Some children have far fewer media resources at home and less access to electronic devices. The important notion of a digital divide refers to the unequal access among children to media and concern that the children who are media have-nots will not be able to keep pace with others who have a huge variety of media from which to choose.

AGE DIFFERENCES

Age and gender differences in how media are used and which forms are chosen affect the type of information that children receive and how it may affect them. The degree to which children can understand and remember what they see on television, for example, is affected by their developmental level. Whereas younger children are more affected by highly salient material such as action, animation, color, and music, school-age children are more interested in things that are consistent with their abilities, situations, and experience, and they are also able to process complex and language-based information and material more efficiently than younger children.

Some of the most important developmental differences in children's use of media include their ability to understand content, to recognize some of the formal features and techniques of television, and to distinguish between what is realistic and what is fantasy, between what is normal or real and what is contrived or embellished. School-age children, for example, are better able to understand replays and flashbacks than younger children. They no longer see them as new occurrences of an event, nor are they as confused by

them. They are better able to understand advertising, including the purpose of advertising and how it can influence buying behavior. Distinguishing reality from fantasy can be a difficult task even for adults, however, as the line is often blurred between reality and media content. Media characters are sometimes treated as real people. For instance, Martin Sheen, who played President Bartlett on NBC's *The West Wing,* was asked for his political opinions during the U.S. presidential campaign, and people who pose as doctors in commercials or celebrities who pitch a product lend weight to the product being advertised. A family's pattern of media use, relationships within the family, and coviewing with family members also affect how seriously children will take media content or how much they will identify with media figures.

VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

There has been concern for many years about the association between exposure to violent content and children's development of more aggressive behavior or decreased sensitivity to violence. Many studies have demonstrated an association between exposure to violence in television portrayals, movies, music videos, magazines, and video games, on the one hand, and changes in some children's attitudes and behavior; however, not all children who view violence or who play violent games become more aggressive. Cognitive ability, amount of viewing, past experience, age and gender, perceived reality, and the number of alternative sources of information determine the impact of such content. Children who view television violence as realistic, for example, and those who have less information about alternative behaviors are more likely to see violence and aggressive behavior as acceptable ways to resolve issues or solve problems. Similarly, children who watch many hours of violence and aggression and who have few alternative real-life social interactions from which to learn may also be more affected by such violence.

Television violence has also been associated with increased fear and anxiety in school-age children. Fantasy violence, graphic news coverage, violent sports, and other portrayals often trigger anxiety and fear rather than increased aggressive behavior. As school-age children tend to fear more those things that *could* happen, such as an abduction, exposure to such content can lead to separation anxiety, sleeping problems, nightmares, and poor focus in school.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

The relationship between media use and school performance and academic achievement is another cause of concern. A considerable amount of research indicates few significant negative effects on light or moderate users of media and some well-documented positive effects. Children increasingly use media, particularly computers and the Internet, to obtain information, do research, and supplement their learning from more traditional avenues such as libraries. For school-age children who have few alternative resources or sources of information, light to moderate TV viewing and computer use at school and in libraries can help them gain information to which they would not otherwise have access and can trigger interest in subject areas to which they were not exposed previously. Heavy media use, on the other hand, is usually associated with negative outcomes, regardless of whether other resources are available or not. The causal direction in these associations is less clear, however. It is possible, for example, that children who are having serious problems in school or whose progress has already been limited may seek out more media use as an alternative source of information or as a way to avoid their difficulties.

MEDIA IMPACT

Amount of media use appears to be one of the most important variables in determining the impact on children and adolescents. Children have increasing access to information not available to children in a pretechnological age, and it is now more difficult for parents to control their children's media use. Children also now have greater access to information that previously was restricted to adults, but this greater access does not mean that they have full comprehension of the material. Their ability to process and understand such information is still affected and limited by their developmental stage, their cognitive ability, and their past experiences.

Despite the high rates of exposure to media that most children experience, and the frequent cautions in the literature for parents to monitor their children's media experience, studies repeatedly point to low levels of such supervision and monitoring by parents. Parents need to ensure that their children are not misunderstanding and misinterpreting media content and that they are exposed to appropriate materials for their

age and developmental level. Talking with children about content, exploring their perceptions and ideas, and helping them to see the possible impact it can have, can be helpful in mitigating a negative influence on children.

A considerable amount of research, then, suggests that the impact of media is greatest when viewers take it seriously to get information, especially when they see the content as realistic and when they have fewer alternative sources of information. Media influence appears to be less significant when various media forms are used in moderation and primarily for diversion or entertainment and when a child has many other activities and sources of information. These factors, however, are also influenced by age, gender, cognitive ability, and family variables, which in turn affect children's use of media, choice of games, and their attention to, comprehension of, and recall of material to which they are exposed. Which media are used, and when, why, how, where, and how much they are used, determine the impact on children's physical, social, psychological, intellectual, and emotional development. Media literacy programs that inform children *about* the media, however, and increased parent education about media use and its effects can lead to children's enjoyment of the most positive aspects of the media while at the same time decreasing potential negative effects and impact.

—Judith Van Evra

See also Computer Use (various entries); Media Exposure; Media Genre Preferences; Movie Viewing, Adolescents'; Movie Viewing, Children's; Music Videos, Effects of; Violence, Effects of

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SCHOOLS, ADVERTISING/ MARKETING IN

Given the extensive presence of commercial interests in today's schools, it may be hard to believe that at one time, schools were thought of as commercial-free settings focused on teaching and learning. Evidence of corporate presence and direct sales appeal to children and teens grew relatively slowly for several decades, but advertising and marketing have exploded in the past 30 years. This entry looks at that history and at the various forms of school-related marketing present today: product sales, direct advertising, indirect advertising, and market research.

HISTORY OF COMMERCIALISM IN SCHOOLS

The noncommercial nature of schools began to change in the 1920s—quietly at first—when public relations frontiersman Edward L. Bernays brought Ivory Soap-sponsored soap-carving competitions into classrooms. The advertising and marketing presence steadily grew in the early 1930s, as the American Bankers Association, tarnished by the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing Depression, worked to restore its image by introducing educational materials into public schools. The marketing pace notably quickened in 1937 when the National Association of Manufacturers distributed its *Young America Magazine* to 70,000 schools. The association promoted the magazine as a way to bring American industry's true story into places needing it most: schools and homes. Junior Achievement arrived in schools by the late 1940s. Designed by American industry as a way to interest children and teens in entrepreneurialism, it further solidified and legitimized corporate presence in the public school classroom.

Public-private partnerships entered the school commercial landscape in 1979, when schools signed on with major corporations in the technology field. With the stated goal of creating computer literacy and a technologically astute workforce, 51% of public schools were participating in these partnerships by 1979.

Meanwhile, Whittle Communications launched the concept of ad panels and wallboards in school hallways and lunchrooms. Featuring product advertising and a celebrity message, these panels and wallboards

rapidly grew in school prominence. In 1989, Whittle Communications introduced Channel One television programming into classrooms, thus moving Whittle from hallways and bulletin boards directly into the instructional day. This move provided the major gateway for the diversity of advertising and marketing approaches that have followed.

CURRENT ADVERTISING AND MARKETING PRACTICES

A U.S. General Accounting Office report in September 2000 created a four-category framework for reviewing in-school advertising and marketing practices: (1) product sales, (2) direct advertising, (3) indirect advertising, and (4) market research. Each category includes a variety of practices described here.

Product Sales

The common feature within this category is the sale of a product to gain revenue for the school.

Exclusionary Contracts

One of most prevalent and publicized practices, *cola contracts* are made with major soft drink companies; an individual school, a school district, or district consortia enters into an exclusionary, multiyear contract with the corporation. Sales quotas are set, and the contracting school, district, or consortium is given a contract-signing payment and guaranteed a certain monetary figure for meeting the quota. Coke and Pepsi are the most prevalent and publicized corporations establishing these contract arrangements. Other contract arrangements are made with fast-food companies to sell food on the school grounds or in the school cafeteria. McDonald's and Taco Bell are two of the corporate entities that establish these kinds of arrangements.

Beyond food and drink, a variety of companies contract on an exclusionary basis in areas such as school pictures, yearbooks, class rings, graduation caps and gowns, and gym uniforms. Nike and Reebok are among the most familiar names in this latter category.

Cash and Credit Rebate Programs

Some schools and districts collect a given store's receipts and, in return, receive a share, perhaps 1%, of the receipt total toward school equipment or supplies. Credit card and Internet shopping adopt a similar principle, with the school being designated at the time of the purchase. Creative newer entries in this category include Dialing for Schools and Driving for Education. In the first, a long-distance telephone service provider agrees to pay the school or district a specified percentage of the revenue generated by local resident and business sign-ups. In the second, a local car dealership offers schools major educational equipment or materials in exchange for proof-of-driving certificates, obtained by having a parent or other participating adult go to the car dealership showroom for a new-car test drive.

Fund-Raising Activities

A third product sales category encompasses a wide range of fund-raising activities. An army of students fan out across the community, selling the product (e.g., candy, magazines, gift wrap) to their parents, relatives, neighbors, and friends. The school or group receives a percentage of the sales revenues.

Direct Advertising

The many approaches in this category all directly advertise to students in school. One of the most prominent venues is advertising on the school grounds and on school equipment (e.g., billboards, marquees, message boards, school buses, and the athletic stadium scoreboard). Company-donated book covers contain assorted ads as do assignment books, posters, and school bus kiosks. In a second venue, school publications (newspaper, yearbook, sports programs) sell ad space to create revenue. A third venue—and one of the most controversial—encompasses media-based advertising. Channel One contracts with schools who agree to show their news program (10 minutes of news, 2 minutes of commercials) on 90% of all school days in 80% of all classrooms. The school receives a satellite dish, two central VCRs, internal wiring, and a television set for each classroom. In a similar contractual pattern, Star Broadcasting beams Top 50 "hot rock" or "hot country" and ads into the schools' hallways, lunchroom, and lobbies. The Word of Mouse ad concept provides ad-laden mouse pads to all the computers in a school system, while newspapers-for-schools programs bring papers and their ads into the classroom.

A fourth avenue of direct advertising is the corporate sample in which a company provides a product sample (e.g., candy, snack food, or personal hygiene product).

Indirect Advertising

Corporate-sponsored educational materials are the most prevalent practice in this category. Companies supply teaching units or educational materials covering a broad range of topics to a school or classroom. Corporate-sponsored contests and incentives are the second most prevalent entry in this category (e.g., a national pizza company giving pizza coupons for reading a specified number of books). Other indirect methods include textbook branding (e.g., using specific product names in mathematics problems), corporate-sponsored teacher training (held in the training-providing company on its equipment) and corporate grants or gifts, the latter being the least commercial method of all.

Market Research

This category has three basic aspects: polls and surveys, Internet panels, and Internet tracking. The panels conduct polls and surveys of tastes, preferences, and demographics online while Internet tracking collects data on individual student "hits" on given websites. These research methods are rapidly growing in sophistication and variety.

The appeal of the school advertising/marketing venue is the unique opportunity to reach all children and teens in the target demographic. Early marketing holds corporate potential for establishing long-term brand loyalties as well as influencing major current family purchases.

—Edward L. Palmer

See also Commercial Television and Radio in Schools; Commercial Television in Schools: Channel One; Food and Beverage Advertising in Schools

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SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

Selective exposure refers to the choice of and continued attention to media presentations for the primary purpose of attaining useful information and mood-altering entertainments. Selective exposure is usually measured in the periods of time that children, adolescents, and adults spend watching television; using computers; listening to the radio and aural recordings of any kind; or reading books, magazines, and the newspaper. The choice of entertainment for the purpose of mood and emotion enhancement has been a central object of exploration. The formation of media preferences in children and adolescents has received much attention in recent selective-exposure research. The pursuit of presentations with informational utility for adolescents has been examined also.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

Selective exposure to media content refers to the selection of essentially one presentation for attentive processing over a period of time of arbitrary duration. Such selection implies the de facto rejection of simultaneously available alternative presentations.

This conceptualization incorporates the premise that human information processing is limited to one integrated chain of events at a time and that in view of the diverse media content offered at all times, people are compelled to exercise choices. In practical terms, people who turn to media content are confined to selecting particular presentations for attentive processing because they cannot attentively trace and make coherent meaning of a multitude of concurrently featured material. The selection may be liberally altered, however, such that people can occasionally or frequently switch between different presentations. In such cases, selective exposure to presentations is accumulated across all segments of time during which attention is given to the perception and processing of the media presentations under consideration.

MEASUREMENT OF SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

The assessment of the people's choice of media presentations has a long-standing history, especially in the political arena, and the questionnaire survey has been

the primary research tool. People are asked to relate their media preferences as best they can recall and are willing to reveal. This technique of assessment was eventually incorporated in a broader approach known as uses and gratifications research. As a significant feature, this approach entails queries about the motives that people believe are driving their media preferences.

Selective-exposure research has taken issue with the validity of introspective accounts of people's exposure motives, and it has established alternative techniques for determining these motives. Focus is on the sampling or the manipulation of exposure motives and on the direct observation of selective-exposure behavior. Although the time of deliberate attention to selected presentations constitutes the primary measure of selective exposure (e.g., the time of listening to specific musical selections or of watching particular television programs), tests on information attained from presentations are used as alternative measures or validating supplements. The expression of exposure desire (i.e., people's indication that they want to see or hear particular media presentations) has also been used as a measure.

SELECTIVE-EXPOSURE THEORY AND RESEARCH

As a part of his theory of cognitive dissonance, Leon Festinger proposed that media messages that appear to challenge an established belief would foster an aversive experience of dissonance and that to avoid the anticipated aversion, people would avoid exposure to such messages. He also proposed that, in contrast, people would be inclined to seek out belief-bolstering messages because these messages offer gratifying confirmation.

The theory of cognitive dissonance generated a considerable amount of research. Much of it challenged rather than supported the derived selective-exposure hypotheses, however, mostly because belief-challenging messages offered useful information and were selected despite their likely creation of dissonance. The theory proved greatly influential nonetheless. Among other things, it led to the sweeping proclamation of negligible media influence, as anything challenging people's views and calling for adjustments would be selectively bypassed.

With the proposal of a mood-management theory, Dolf Zillmann shifted attention from the consideration of the selective-exposure implications for attitude changes concerning political and health issues to the mood-altering capacity of entertainment. His theory assumes that entertainment choices may be rather random initially but then are shaped by reactions of pleasure or displeasure that result from chosen exposure. More specifically, the theory projects that people in a bad mood who experience alleviation or a change to good mood after exposure to specific material will be inclined to expose themselves again to similar material. In contrast, people in a bad mood who experience no mood improvement or even a turn for the worse will be inclined to avoid exposing themselves again to similar material. More generally and irrespective of prior mood, it is expected that mood improvement from exposure to particular media presentations will increase the likelihood of future exposure to these presentations, whereas mood worsening from exposure will diminish the likelihood of future exposure. The frequent experience of consistent mood change from exposure to an apparent class of presentations then fosters a degree of preference or disdain as an enduring choice-guiding disposition. This disposition is affective and does not depend on the cognitive elaborations such some decision models propose. Allowances are made, however, for the recognition of the affective nature of preferences and for their cognitive endorsement or modification.

Selective-exposure research has determined three characteristics of media presentations that effectively serve mood enhancement as projected by mood-management theory: (a) for mood improvement generally, material that has the capacity to elevate experienced positive mood above and beyond that of prevailing states; (b) for relief from aversively experienced states of hyper- or hypo-arousal, exposure material that has the capacity to reverse level of arousal; and (c) for negative states, material that has little or no semantic affinity with the circumstances that created the prevailing states.

Generally speaking, mood-management theory has received considerable support from research on entertainment preferences. Some challenges of the pleasure-based premise of the theory are apparent, however. They come primarily from findings concerning the appeal of tragic drama and the lure of destructive violence in horror and in reality programs, including the news. Theories of informational utility have been invoked to complement mood-management considerations. These theories emphasize principal dimensions of salience, such as the magnitude, likelihood,

and immediacy of threats to, or rewarding opportunities for, personal welfare. In addition, selective-exposure research has started to explore the apparent appeal of information about the endangerment and victimization of others per se, especially when such information is pictorially conveyed. Counterhedonistic media choices of this kind have been explained as an evolutionary remnant of environmental screening.

Although selective-exposure theorizing is partial to exposure-decision models that require little cognitive elaboration, it is open to reflective models, such as Icek Ajzen's theory of reasoned, planned behavior. Cognitive models of this kind are well suited to explaining why, for instance, people decide to seek out counterhedonistic, even acutely distressing messages, in the interest of informed citizenship. Similarly, they can explain why people delay exposure to gratifying presentations to pursue more essential but less enjoyable objectives first. The consideration of rationally imposed delays in yielding to hedonistic exposure motives, addressed as telic hedonism in mood-management theory, is particularly important in avoiding the derivation of faulty predictions from the theory.

—Dolf Zillmann

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and media; Choice in media use; Depression, Media Use and; Media Genre Preferences; Mood Management Theory; Music Listening (various entries); Selectivity; Tweens, Media Preferences of

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SELECTIVITY

Selectivity is the process of selecting media content. The concept is most commonly used to refer to intentional exposure to media content. Intentionally avoiding certain types of content can also be considered a form of selectivity. The processes governing selectivity also explain why some content appears to be selected or avoided unintentionally.

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTIVITY RESEARCH

Both public scrutiny of and research on the contents of the media often lead to concerns about the potential effects of media messages on children, in particular when explicit sexual, violent, or offensive content is involved. Nevertheless, content analyses of the media do not tell us all we need to know to decide whether the media have an effect. Media can have effects on people only if those people were *exposed* to the messages we are concerned about. Quantitative content analyses usually fail to make a distinction between content broadcast and content received. On the other hand, some theories have been based on the assumption of nonselectivity. Much research on cultivation theory, for instance, assumes that television viewers "watch by the hour" and are nonselective.

WHAT EXPLAINS EXPOSURE TO MEDIA CONTENT?

Three processes influence exposure to media content. First, individual characteristics explain certain media

behaviors. Children cannot watch television when they are at school. Second, structural factors explain media behaviors. Even the biggest fan of a particular monthly magazine cannot read new issues of the magazine every week. Finally, uses and gratification processes guide media use. Children expose themselves to certain types of media content because they gratify particular needs.

Individual Characteristics

The most important factor at the individual level is availability. A person can only watch television shows or listen to radio programs when he or she is available when they are being broadcast. Digitalization and miniaturization of devices may change the importance of this factor in the future as far as physical availability is concerned. Some research suggests that recording devices or exposure-on-demand systems are less powerful than may have been expected. People still tend to expose themselves to most media messages when those messages are provided through the regular channels.

When a child or adolescent is busy (either in a school environment or during leisure activities), that person is mentally unavailable.

The second individual factor is awareness of the media and of alternatives. Television viewers often end up watching programs they are not particularly interested in because they are unaware of more interesting programs on other channels. This is explained partly by lack of knowledge, partly by habit: People go to the same websites for news or have a limited repertoire of television channels from which they choose.

Structural Factors

Availability is also an important characteristic of what the media supply. If there are no magazines, books, or websites about a particular hobby, an enthusiast of that hobby will not be able to read about it. In countries where mainstream TV channels do not broadcast soft pornography, children have no access to such programs.

The fact that other people influence viewing behavior is often overlooked. For anyone not living alone, media exposure is a result of group pressures and group influences. Behavior of the individual is, thus, not independent from the behavior of the other members of the family, creating (in theoretical and statistical terms) a multilevel problem. This is particularly true in the case of children because of parental mediation: Whether children and adolescents are exposed to certain media messages is strongly influenced by the extent to which their parents are willing and able to influence their media use behaviors.

Preferences

Research on television viewing appears to suggest that individual and structural factors explain most media exposure. From 25% to 50% of the viewers of one episode of a series watch the next episode. This might suggest that exposure to TV is almost random; however, in reality, the inconsistencies are mainly explained by variation in the other factors, such as availability. Some have argued that selectivity should not be studied at the level of an individual television program but at a more general level, such as that of genre. Selectivity does not imply that people should watch only one program, listen to only one type of music, or always read the same newspaper. It is likely that even if the actual message selected differs, the gratification sought is still the same.

Although the main gratification sought from television is not derived from some particular type of content but from mere exposure to the medium, this fact is often overlooked. This gratification-seeking explains apparently pointless channel hopping: Viewers sometimes prefer watching anything to not watching at all.

ACTIVE SELECTION OR PASSIVE AVOIDANCE?

Selection of media content is a multifaceted issue. Some children expose themselves to certain types of media because they actively seek them out. Others are exposed as a result of structural and individual factors with little active involvement, as is the case when children who watch one program simply continue to watch the next program that is on that channel (a process known as the *lead-in* effect). Similarly, some children actively try to avoid certain types of media content, whereas others are never exposed to certain types of content through no active choice of their own. It is a mistake to assume that exposure is always the result of some conscious act. Few authors seem to have realized that uses and gratifications research should not be limited to "gratifications sought" and "gratifications found." Four types of selective behavior exist:

intentional exposure, unintentional exposure, unintentional avoidance, and intentional avoidance.

—*Jan Van den Bulck*

See also Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Selective Exposure; Uses and Gratifications Theory

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SENSATION SEEKING

Sensation seeking is a psychological concept with biological foundations; it has been defined by Marvin Zuckerman (1994) as "the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experience" (p. 27). Sensation seeking seems to reach its peak for most people during adolescence, rendering it a key concept in the study of media use and effects among younger audiences. Research on media and sensation seeking among children and adolescents has mostly centered in two areas: entertainment and targeted health campaigns.

MEASURING SENSATION SEEKING

Although sensation seeking is almost always measured using self-report techniques, empirical evidence supports the common assumption that sensation seeking is accompanied by higher levels of physiological arousal. More recent theorizing has found high sensation seekers to have a *high positivity offset* and a *low negativity bias.* Positivity offset is the degree to which one's appetite system is more active than one's aversive system in a neutral environment. Negativity bias is the speed with which the aversive system responds to negative stimuli of increasing intensity. Usually, although not always, sensation seeking is measured with a version of Zuckerman's Sensation Seeking Scale, which consists of four subscales: experience seeking, thrill and adventure seeking, disinhibition, and boredom susceptibility. However, some scholars criticize this scale, contending, for one thing, that the four subfactors have inconsistent relationships with various media-related factors.

ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

Some research in this area has looked at the relationship between sensation seeking and the ways in which adolescents use a particular medium, such as television. Some research claims that young viewers who are very high sensation seekers do not use television, probably because of the medium's inability to truly stimulate and create high levels of arousal.

A large proportion of the research on sensation seeking and entertainment has focused more specifically on what differences exist in media genre preferences between high and low sensation seekers. Studies have found that high sensation seeking is related to consumption of horror (especially for those enjoy watching gory scenes), violent films, heavy metal music, and violent media content and to watching action and music videos, daytime talk shows, stand-up comedy programs, documentaries, and cartoons; on the other side, it is related to watching fewer newscasts and drama series. High sensation seekers also find violent cartoons funnier and action and adventure programs more interesting. Additional research has found that the disinhibition subfactor may be positively related to enjoyment of violent content (except violent drama), but thrill and adventure seeking may be negatively related to enjoyment. In other work, alienation was found to mediate the link between sensation seeking and use of violent media; that is, sensation seeking was related to alienation, which was in turn related to use of violent media.

Further empirical inquiry has examined the moderating effect of sensation seeking in responses to violent media content among adolescents and children. A study found that youth were more aggressive when they were at higher than their normal levels of sensation seeking and at higher than their normal levels of violent media use.

HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

The second major line of research on sensation seeking, young people, and the media involves health communication campaigns. Because high sensation seekers are risk takers, they also tend to engage in risky health behaviors more frequently, especially the use of illicit drugs and gateway drugs such as cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana. Thus, Philip Palmgreen and others have developed a program called SENTAR (sensation-seeking targeting) to reach young audiences with advertisements addressing a variety of risky health behaviors. Advertising campaigns with high sensation value can be developed that are more likely to effectively persuade this target population.

This approach has been tested using public service announcements that address several risky behaviors, such as marijuana use, cocaine use, and heroin use in high sensation-seeking adolescents. Other studies have found that high sensation seekers remember these targeted ads more and that the ads are effectively reaching this population. Research also indicates that high sensation-seeking adolescents process these types of ads with a combination of sympathetic distress and argument-based processing as opposed to low sensation-seeking adolescents, who use a strictly argument-based process.

There is evidence that the popular Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program, in which police officers lead classroom-based sessions on drugs, seemed to work better for high sensation seekers. While these people still used more drugs than low sensation seekers, high sensation seekers who participated in DARE had a greater percentage difference when compared to non-DARE schools than was exhibited for low sensation seekers.

Overall, sensation seeking is an important variable when considering young people and the media. Empirical evidence indicates that sensation seeking is an important indicator of what types of media young people will seek out. It is also a critical consideration in testing the diffusion and effectiveness of public health campaigns targeted at adolescents.

—Kenneth A. Lachlan and David K. Westerman

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and media; Media Genre Preferences; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

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SESAME WORKSHOP

All children deserve a chance to learn and grow. To be prepared for school. To better understand the world and each other. To think, dream and discover. To reach their highest potential.

—Sesame Workshop

Sesame Workshop, first established as the Children's Television Workshop in 1968, is a nonprofit organization of writers, artists, researchers, and educators who create educational content for children from birth through age 12; that content is delivered through multiple media: television, radio, books, magazines, computers, film, video, and community outreach. Sesame Workshop is best known for *Sesame Street,* a pioneering program designed by producers, researchers, and educators to harness the power of media to address school readiness for underserved preschoolers. Other programs produced by Sesame Workshop addressed educational gaps in mathematics (*Square One TV*), literacy (*The Electric Company* and *Ghostwriter)*, science and technology (*3-2-1 Contact* and *Cro*), and resiliency (*Dragon Tales*).

Sesame Workshop creates innovative, engaging content for children in more than 120 countries worldwide, partnering with local experts to ensure its programs and products are both culturally relevant and educationally sound. The content created provides access to all kinds of learning—spanning the entire range of children's developmental needs. These topics range from the academic basics of literacy, mathematics, and science to health and life skills such as coping with emotions, conflict resolution, sharing, respect, and inclusion. The content is uniquely delivered in real-life contexts; subjects have included overcoming the stigma of AIDS in South Africa; educating girls in Egypt; promoting cross-cultural respect and understanding among children in the Middle East; and in this post-9/11 world, helping U.S. children demystify differences and value diversity.

To maintain the highest standards of curriculum design, as well as incorporate recent findings of research, all content is developed through a dynamic process. This process involves educators, researchers, and producers who collaborate throughout the life of a project to ensure that everything created is both engaging and developmentally appropriate. This unique, ongoing integration of curriculum development, formative research (i.e., research conducted to inform production decisions regarding the appeal and comprehension of content in relation to the intended target audience), and summative research (i.e., research conducted to assess the educational impact of the content) into the process of production is known as the Sesame Workshop Model.

Sesame Workshop uses children's natural attraction to media in ways that serve their best interests and their highest potential. As a nonprofit organization, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from the sales of licensed products right back into the development of *Sesame Street* and other programs and initiatives for children in the United States and around the world.

The Sesame Workshop experience shows that "small things"—a hand puppet, a kind word, a song—can make a big difference. Small beginnings have profound possibilities, especially when their effects are multiplied by a global community committed to making meaningful, measurable, lasting differences in children's lives, now and for generations to come.

—Rosemarie T. Truglio

See also Children's Television Act of 1990; Television, Prosocial Content and

SEX, INTERNET SOLICITATION OF

The Internet can be used for a variety of sexual purposes, including sexual enlightenment or advice, erotic matter and pornography, sex shops, and webcams showing sexual activity. In addition, the Internet, with its chat rooms and online forums, its game sites and dating sites, has become a popular contacts market where it is possible to seek and find partners for flirting, love affairs, or sex, whether on a virtual or real-life basis. Although much of this activity involves consenting adults, some sexual solicitation is directed at children and adolescents and leads to the victimization of young people. There is no empirical knowledge yet available on how intensively young people (male and female) in different age groups and cultures participate in the Internet as active searchers for sexual contact. However, they do initiate such activity, which may lead to problematic relationships even when it does not lead to criminal victimization.

The terms *virtual sex* or *cybersex* are used to describe sensual interactions between two or more people that take place online (via email, instant messaging, online chat, webcam, etc.), are intended to achieve sexual excitation and satisfaction, and are often accompanied by masturbation. Some Internet users consciously restrict their erotic online contacts

to cybersex. Others are mainly interested in real sexual encounters.

Surveys carried out in the United States reveal that a significant percentage of both male and female adult users are involved in sexual solicitation on the Internet. From the standpoint of clinical psychology, the vast majority of these users are adults of sound mind who have positive experiences of consensual sexual activities that they engage in online with other adults. However, a minority of those practicing cybersex have psychological difficulties or disorders. People with deviant sexual preferences, such as a sexual interest in children, may take advantage of the anonymity and opportunity for a virtual identity switch that the Internet affords to act out their deviant patterns. It is also possible for them to assert the legitimacy of their behavior in online forums with people who have similar preferences.

PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL SOLICITATIONS AND INTERNET SEX CRIMES

In a 2000 U.S. survey by Finkelhor, Mitchell, and Wolak, a representative sample of young users (between 10 and 17 years old) of the Internet were surveyed. About 19% of them declared they had received unwanted sexual solicitation in the previous year. In the majority of cases, the children and young people ignored the messages, and neither online nor offline contacts resulted. However, 5% of those surveyed said they had also received a distressing sexual solicitation (i.e., the solicitation made them feel very or extremely upset or afraid). One third of the surveyed youth who had received a solicitation were male, and two thirds were female. According to the youth, adults (age 18 and older) made 24% of all solicitations and juveniles 48% (the age of the solicitor was unknown in the remaining 28% of all solicitations).

The 2003 National Juvenile Online Victimization Study was conducted in the United States between July 1, 2000, and July 1, 2001, by Wolak, Mitchell, and Finkelhor, to help in determining the scope of Internet sex crimes against minors. An examination of law enforcement activities at the local, county, and state levels turned up 2,577 arrests for Internet sex crimes against minors during that period. The perpetrators were almost always male (99%), non-Hispanic white (92%), and more than 25 years old (86%); nearly all (97%) acted alone in the crime, and many (67%) possessed child pornography. Internet sex crime arrests could be divided into three separate groups:

- 36% of the arrests were associated with possession of, exchange of, or trade in child pornography but not its production.
- 39% of the arrests were for harm to individual, identifiable minors. In these cases, the perpetrators made contact with the victims via the Internet to abuse them online or offline. The perpetrators questioned young people in chat or email situations about their sexual fantasies and experience, sent them explicit sexual propositions, or encouraged them to take part in sexual telephone calls, exchange of photos, or a videoconference in which they appeared naked. Where a meeting offline had been arranged on the Internet, in extreme cases, the outcome had been rape and murder. In half the cases, the perpetrators arrested were strangers to the child; in the other half, they were people from the child's real social setting (such as family members or friends of their parents).
- 25% of the arrests were achieved by means of undercover investigations in which police officers claimed to be minors on the net in chat rooms and contact exchanges. Here the detectives act as decoys for adults who are online to achieve sexual contact with children. Although there is no actual harm to a child in these cases, the attempt at child abuse is itself a crime in the United States.

It is important that detectives playing the child's role should not themselves introduce sexual subjects or proffer sex but should simply observe whether these come from the potential perpetrator, whose identity is then pursued. These undercover detective practices are permitted by law in certain countries (such as the United States) but not in others (such as Germany).

In view of the frequently alarmist reports in the media on the perils of the Internet, it must be emphasized that the Internet cases are offset by many millions of cases of sexual abuse of children offline each year in the United States. It is thus hardly justified to represent the Internet as an outstanding danger zone. Moreover, prevention and countermeasures are particularly effective in the context of Internet crime; for example, a girl who receives sexually suggestive emails via Internet can tell her parents, who can get help from Internet providers and prosecution authorities to follow the digital trail and trace the originator of the message.

OTHER RISKS OF ONLINE ACTIVITY

Besides the danger of becoming the victim of an Internet-related sex crime, young people engaging in sexualized contacts via the Internet with their contemporaries are exposed to other risks. Pushy behavior and harassment can increase under the protection of anonymity, and adolescents can be perpetrators as well as victims of such activity. It is a particularly common event in many chat rooms for women and girls (and anybody using a feminine nickname) to be faced with unwanted sexual remarks and propositions. To avoid them, children and teenagers should limit their visits to chat rooms and online platforms that have moderators and rules of use to prevent (and, if necessary, prosecute) inappropriate behavior. At the same time, young people need to be taught about what is appropriate as online behavior toward other young people (both outside and within the sexual context).

Even if an online sexual approach from one young person to another has followed an enjoyable course, dangers can still arise in the transfer to offline contact. Exchanging confidences online with unknown people can very quickly generate feelings of closeness and bonding. The perception of closeness or even of being in love may well lead to unwisely trusting behavior at the first real meeting. It is, therefore, recommended that a first rendezvous after online flirting take place only with the knowledge of significant others (perhaps in their presence or in a public setting), so that the risk of an unpleasant surprise is reduced and the situation can be kept under control. Young people and their parents need to be well-informed as to the appropriate precautions.

If the first face-to-face encounter is a pleasant event, the relationship is likely to proceed faster than usual to sexual activity. One reason is that feelings of closeness and of longing have already been developed in the course of the preceding online communication and may weaken the resolve to practice only safe sex. Another factor may be shortage of time. Because Internet acquaintances often live at quite a distance from each other, personal meetings tend to be rare and brief, leaving less scope for slow, reflective development of the relationship. In view of this, sex education should include not only the facts of life but those of Internet affairs and relationships.

There is a further risk in using the Internet for erotic or sexual purposes: Unfaithfulness and two-timing are more likely. Adults are not the only ones to end up in marital crisis because of their partners' cybersex adventures. Young people, too, can suffer greatly when steady boyfriends or girlfriends practice online infidelity—flirting with other girls or boys online, exchanging erotic photos, and setting up sexual situations. Many people take the partner's affair as a real and serious betrayal of the real-life relationship, even when it has remained purely a cyberaffair. Other couples define cybersex as unreal games and permit such play to partners. Ubiquitous cybersex opportunities force couples into negotiation of the relevant rules and boundaries for their relationship.

Finally, because online sexual encounters provide immediate rewards, adolescents (as well as adults) with escapist tendencies can get dependent on them.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADOLESCENTS

Amassing sexual experience is one of the developmental tasks for young people as they grow into adults. Many factors, both internal and via social contact, determine their sexual socialization. The media are often perceived as a potential danger or disruption to this process—in instances, perhaps, where children and adolescents are confronted with sexual material they do not yet understand. However, it is also possible for the media to contribute very positively to the process of sexual socialization; for example, media may be a vehicle for vital and accurate sexual information and may provide a safe space in which adolescents can explore and express their sexuality in age-appropriate ways.

From this point of view, the potential of the sexual contact on offer on the Internet can be seen as good. Those young people whose social environment restricts their opportunities for healthy development on the sexual front can find them on the Internet. They can share sexual fears, fantasies, and feelings with their contemporaries, acting them out symbolically in cybersex. For example, young gays and lesbians are often very isolated if they live in rural areas; Internet forums and chat rooms may provide an opportunity to explore their sexual identity with other youngsters of the same mind and obtain social support.

Computer-mediated communication also lowers the threshold of inhibition, making it easier for people to give a relaxed and self-assured impression, which can make sexual approaches less scary for adolescents than they otherwise tend to be. The Internet can even be a realm where sexual experimentation can take place in relative safety (especially for girls). The sexual interactions typical of online chats or role-play

games on MUDs (multi-user dungeons or domains) require that things otherwise often left unsaid be put into words, with the result that a high degree of intimacy is achieved. Obviously, it would be mistaken to idealize these constructive aspects of cybersex, but they are frequently reported. The quality of cybersex is not a matter of the medium but of the sexual and social competence of those involved.

—Nicola Döring

See also Chat Rooms; Chat Rooms, Social and Linguistic Processes in; Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Addiction to; Internet Use, Age and; Multi-User Dungeons/Domains (MUDs); Sex, Media Impact on; Sexual Information, Internet and; Sexualization of Children

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SEX, MEDIA IMPACT ON

Sexual content typically has been defined as any depiction of sexual activity, sexually suggestive behavior, or talk about sexuality or sexual activity. It has been estimated that the typical American adolescent encounters about 10,000 to 15,000 sexual references, jokes, and innuendoes in the media each year.

Despite ongoing criticism of the media's increasingly frequent and explicit sexual content, less than 1% of published research studies have investigated the association between media exposure and sexual beliefs and behaviors. Much of the research has focused on documenting what kind of sexual content is in various kinds of media, while only a few studies have linked that content with subsequent effects on sexual behavior. Most of the studies of sexual content have focused on television, with an emphasis on prime-time shows, music videos, and soap operas; fewer studies have examined magazines, feature films, music, advertising, videogames, and the Internet.

The Kaiser Family Foundation has sponsored a biennial study of sex on television since the late 1990s. These studies have shown that sexual content is prevalent, varies slightly by genre, and has increased in frequency. In general, television's sexual content is not typically visually graphic but is dominated by either verbal innuendo or less explicit physical acts; most of the sexual action and language occurs outside marital relationships; discussion and depiction of sexual planning and consequences are rarely portrayed; and women's physical beauty and men's strength and physical prowess are emphasized. In short, television frequently portrays spontaneous, glamorous sexual behavior outside long-term relationships. The typical depiction of sexual activity has been classified as recreational rather than relational.

Sexual images and messages are more explicit in some mainstream magazines, especially women's and men's health and fitness magazines. Women's magazines encourage women to focus on increasing their sexual desirability to gain the attention of men. The work of relationships is depicted as the exclusive domain of women, while men are expected always to be ready for sex.

In the early part of the 21st century, the average adolescent in the United States spends more than 40 hours per week with some form of mass media. Many have access to the media in the privacy of their own bedrooms, and many spend more time with the media than with their parents. Simultaneously, school systems are increasingly reluctant to provide comprehensive sex education. Given this heavy frequency of media use, relatively less time spent with parents, school reticence, and increased access to sexual content in the media, it is reasonable to expect that children and adolescents might be learning about sex from the media. Adolescents often cite the media as one of their top sources of sexual information.

Early correlational studies and a few experimental studies in which exposure to sexual content was varied found that more frequent exposure to sexually oriented television genres such as soap operas and music videos was associated with more permissive attitudes about premarital sex among adolescents. Two longitudinal studies also showed that exposure to sexual content in the media was related to earlier sexual behavior. Collins et al. (2004) conducted a telephone survey of a representative sample of 12-to-17-year olds and found that increased exposure to sexual content on television increased the likelihood of a teen having sexual intercourse within the following year. Brown et al. (2006) found that greater exposure to a diet of sexual content across four media (television, movies, music, magazines) in early adolescence predicted earlier initiation of sexual intercourse 2 years later. Thus, the pattern of findings indicate that exposure to sexual media content is indeed linked to sexual outcomes.

Although most concern has focused on the idea that the media cause young people to have sex earlier than they might otherwise, it is likely that young people also seek sexual information in the media as they enter puberty and sexual feelings and relationships become more relevant. It may well be that as sexual content in the media becomes more salient, young people seek it out and then learn and are affected by what they see, hear, and read. It is important to remember, too, that all teens will not be affected in the same way or to the same extent. In the Brown et al. (2006) study, the linkage between sexual media diet and sexual behavior was stronger for the white adolescents than it was for the African American youth. The African American teens apparently were more influenced by perceptions of their parents' expectations and their friends' sexual behavior than by what they saw or heard in the media. Media effects do not occur in a vacuum, and audiences come to the media with other information and norms that influence how they interpret and apply what they find in the media. This is the basic premise of the media practice model, which has been used to help explain how the media are used by adolescents as they develop a sense of who they are as sexual human beings.

Three other theories have been used to understand how the media have an effect on sexual beliefs and behavior. Cultivation theory suggests that the consistency of the portrayal of sexual content in the media will cultivate common beliefs about sexual norms and patterns of sexual behavior, especially among frequent media users. Cognitive social learning theory suggests that young people will imitate the kind of sexual behavior they see in the media especially if the characters are seen as similar to them and as attractive and if they do not suffer negative consequences. Experimental studies examining short-term effects of sexual media stimuli support the ideas of priming theory: that the media may activate semantically related concepts that gradually form stereotypical sexual schemas in adolescents' minds.

The study of the sexual effects of the media is relatively young compared to research on other kinds

of media effects, such as the effect of TV violence on aggressive behavior. More studies are needed to sort out the direction and pattern of effects on sexual beliefs and behaviors. Very little is known, for example, about the sexual effects of the Internet. The Internet provides unprecedented access to much more explicit sexual content than what has been provided in mainstream media, so it will be important to learn more about how young people are using and responding to such content.

—Jane D. Brown and Amy Shirong Lu

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Bedrooms, Media Use in; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Sex in Television, Incidence and Themes

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SEX IN TELEVISION, CONTENT ANALYSIS OF

Quantitative content analyses conducted over the past two decades have documented the form and frequency of sexual content on television programming, finding that the programs most watched by youth are saturated with references to and depictions of sexual behavior (often physical flirting, passionate kissing, or intimate touching). Indeed, more than 80% of the prime-time television programs most popular among adolescents contain references to or depictions of sexual behavior. These analyses have further demonstrated that, over time, the amount of sexual content on television has increased, as have discussions of sexual risk and safer-sex topics. Qualitative content analyses find that television's sexual content includes multiple thematic messages about the value, consequences, and nature of sexual activity. For example, sex is frequently depicted as recreational in nature, and men and women are typically depicted as having different sexual roles.

Recent analyses find that roughly one third of television programs contain at least one depiction of sexual behavior, reflecting an increase from one quarter of programs in the late 1990s. Among programs rated favorably by adolescents, this rate climbs to 50%, with the average 1-hour program containing three scenes with depictions of sexual behavior. The vast majority of these depictions consist of precursory sexual behaviors, such as physical flirting, passionate kissing, or intimate touching. Although explicit depictions of sexual intercourse are rare, intercourse is frequently implied by the use of cinematic techniques familiar to young audiences. For example, a couple may be shown lying in bed, partially clothed immediately following a scene with passionate kissing and touching. More than 10% of all prime-time television programs contain such instances of implied intercourse, and as many as 20% of the programs most popular among adolescents contain instances of implied or depicted intercourse. These sexual behaviors occur, most commonly, between unmarried partners.

In addition to quantifying the frequency of sexual behaviors, content analysis has been used to evaluate the messages *about* sexuality conveyed via sexual dialogue. The television programs most watched by adolescents are specifically saturated with sexual talk; at the episode level, as many as 80% of programs popular among teens contain talk about sex, compared to less than 70% of all network prime-time programs and about 60% of the full range of television programming. Closer inspection of individual episodes reveals that sexual talk appears frequently and consistently in the programs children and adolescents watch most. Rather than appearing only once or twice in an episode, sex

talk typically occurs in more than a quarter of all character interactions, so that a child might expect to hear anywhere from 10 to 30 comments about sexuality while watching her favorite half-hour program; a teen might hear as many as 45 such comments.

In light of children's and adolescents' frequent exposure to sexual content on television, concern has been raised regarding the relative infrequency with which sexual risk and safer-sex practices are acknowledged. Content analyses of youth-oriented television programs aired in the 1990s revealed that fewer than 15% of programs with sexual content addressed the potential risks associated with sexual activity or described the safer-sex practices that could be involved in preventing risk. Risk and prevention messages were conceptualized to include partners' choice to delay intercourse, the use of safer-sex practices (e.g., condoms), or depictions of the negative consequences of sex (e.g., an unwanted pregnancy). Content analysis of more recently aired programs shows a shift toward more frequent acknowledgment of sexual risk and safer-sex practices. About 25% of programs with sexual content addressed risk and prevention themes, and programs featuring teen characters were the most likely to contain such messages.

The content of sexual dialogue further tends to endorse a specific set of messages about sexuality. First, dialogue is used to convey meaning about the value of sexuality. Consistent with findings that sexual behavior on television occurs most frequently among unmarried partners, dialogue about sexuality commonly puts forth the value of recreational sex. Sex is discussed as a game or competition between women and men and as a fun, exciting, and pleasurable activity for everyone. Less common but still present are messages about the relational nature of sexuality, and these include discussion of the emotional connections between partners and the intimacy associated with sexuality. Second, dialogue is used to convey different sexual roles of heterosexual men and women. Men are portrayed as sex-driven and concerned primarily with women's appearance. Women, on the other hand, are often portrayed as passive gatekeepers of men's sexual advances. When they are portrayed actively in pursuit of sexual activity—which happens frequently—such behavior is punished more often than not. Specifically, a content analysis of prime-time dramas featuring teen and college-age characters found that depictions of sexual activity initiated by female characters were significantly more likely to result in negative consequences (including rejection, unwanted pregnancy, or formal punishment) than similar incidents initiated by male characters.

Gay and lesbian characters have recurring roles in several of the programs most popular among children and adolescents, such as *Will & Grace*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Dawson's Creek,* and *The Simpsons*, and they have smaller roles in many more programs. Although larger-scale (and quantitative) content analyses have not addressed same-sex sexual behavior or dialogue about homosexuality, a small set of studies have subjected television content to critical analysis for themes about and representations of homosexuality. Comedies such as *Will & Grace* and *The Simpsons* have received attention for their regular inclusion of homosexual characters and frequent references to same-sex desire. At the same time, these programs have been criticized for portrayals that stereotype homosexual characters or that divorce same-sex behavior from same-sex desire.

—Deborah Schooler

See also Advertising, Sexuality in; Movies, Sexuality in; Research Methods, Content Analyses; Schemas/Scripts, Sexual; Sex, Media Impact on; Sex in Television, Incidence and Themes; Sex in Television, Perceived Realism of; Sexual Content, Age and Comprehension of; Soap Operas, Sexuality in

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SEX IN TELEVISION, INCIDENCE AND THEMES

Systematic content analysis research has been conducted since the 1970s to identify patterns of sexual messages on entertainment television programming and to illuminate the media's role in the process of sexual socialization. The pervasiveness of television and its repeated messages make it an important socializing

agent with regard to sex. Many young people report that they rely on television for information about sexual issues and norms. To date, content analyses have provided information regarding the extent of sexual messages on entertainment programs and the context within which such messages are embedded. Content analyses have been conducted on both the overall entertainment television landscape (usually excluding sports, news, and children's programming) and programming that is more relevant and appealing to young people. Different content analyses often define and measure sex in diverse ways, making it difficult to compare findings across studies. Still, several conclusions can be drawn about the presentation of sex on entertainment television.

THE INCIDENCE OF SEXUAL CONTENT ON TELEVISION

Sexual messages on television have increased over the years. Most recently, content analyses have revealed that nearly two thirds of all programs include some sexual content. The percentage of programs that include messages about sex is even higher in prime-time programming, where between 71% and 85% of programs have been found to include such content. Studies have found about 10 to 15 instances of sexual imagery, language, or behavior per hour of prime-time programming.

Examining specific genres of television programming, researchers have found that soap operas tend to include the highest rates of sexual content, followed by comedies, which usually present sex in a humorous context. Movies tend to include more, and more explicit, sexual content than original television programming, and programs on cable networks tend to portray more sex than broadcast programs. Interestingly, programs that adolescents view most tend to include an especially high incidence of sex, with up to four out of five shows including at least one scene with sexual content. Nearly one third of interactions per hour of prime-time programming viewed by teens include sexual messages.

Researchers have lately been examining the specific sexual media diets of adolescents, acknowledging that television is part of a constellation of media content to which youth are exposed. A recent study found that 11% of television content specifically viewed by adolescents contained sexual content. About half to three quarters of music videos, a genre specifically produced for and targeted at adolescents, have consistently been found to include sexual imagery, often combining sexuality with violence.

Researchers are in agreement that the majority of sexual portrayals on television are in the form of talk about sex, and fewer are depictions of sexual behaviors. Although explicitness has increased through the years, sexual behaviors on television tend to be more implicit, relying mostly on innuendo in the form of sexual suggestiveness and light physical contact. The most common sexual behavior on television is kissing. Sexual intercourse, although portrayed less frequently, has been increasing significantly over the years. It is now included in nearly 15% of entertainment programs. Sexual intercourse is particularly common in soap operas and prime-time shows viewed by adolescents.

THE CONTEXT OF SEXUAL CONTENT ON TELEVISION

Contextual variations in the content of television programs are likely to lead to different effects on viewers. Therefore, beyond the frequency with which sex is portrayed on television, it is important to consider the nature of such portrayals. Content analyses have focused on the characters who engage in sexual behaviors, primarily examining their age and gender, as well as the relationships between those engaging in intercourse. Other contextual elements that have received attention in content analyses include the mention of risks associated with sexual behaviors and the consequences depicted for these behaviors.

Characters Engaged in Sexual Intercourse

Sexual intercourse, arguably the most salient sexual behavior for adolescents on television, is portrayed in nearly one in seven entertainment programs. Sexual intercourse acts portrayed on television occur most often between adults who are acquainted with but are not married to one another (see Ward, 2003, for a review). Less than 5% of characters who engage in intercourse across all television programming, and 10% of those in soap operas, are teens. Except for soap operas, in which characters tend to portray negative or balanced attitudes toward sexual activities, characters express mostly positive attitudes toward sex and a recreational orientation, treating sex as a

casual activity meant to bring pleasure and enjoyment to the individual. In prime-time programming viewed by teens, characters' physical attractiveness is of importance.

Risks and Consequences Associated With Sexual Behaviors

Few mentions of the risks associated with sex, such as unintended pregnancy or the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, occur on television programming, although their incidence has been slightly increasing over the years. Still, when risks are addressed, their treatment is mostly superficial. This is true across the entertainment television landscape as well as in specific programming such as prime-time shows, soap operas, and shows heavily viewed by teenagers. Most acts of sexual intercourse on television—and on television programming viewed by teens—result in no clear positive or negative consequences. When consequences of intercourse are portrayed, positive outcomes are more common than negative ones, especially on genres such as soap operas. Only about one fifth to one third of consequences mentioned on television refer to negative outcomes such as unintended pregnancy or HIV and STD contraction. Although one study found considerably more interactions about sexuality that resulted in or noted negative consequences, most of these consequences were emotional or social in nature and only few were physical, a finding consistent with past studies.

—Keren Eyal

See also Movies, Sexuality in; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Sexual Risk and Responsibility, Portrayals of; Soap Operas, Content Analyses of; Soap Operas, Sexuality in

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SEX IN TELEVISION, PERCEIVED REALISM OF

Television programs are filled with both visual and verbal sexual content. Sexual behaviors, innuendo, and discussions appear in a wide range of programs. Although a number of studies have examined the relationship between viewing sexual content and beliefs about social reality, fewer studies have investigated the ways in which the perceived reality of television's sexual content is related to children's and adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviors. Most of these have focused on older adolescents, specifically college undergraduates. These studies have looked at the ways in which perceived reality mediates the impact of different types of sexual content, as well as the extent to which attitudes, gender, experience, and age influence perceptions of the realism of sexual content.

Research in perceived reality is based on the assumption that exposure to television content alone does not determine the impact of that content. Children and adolescents actively select and interpret television content and assess its reality by referring to their own experiences, observations, and knowledge of the world. If the content of television is viewed as being realistic, it may be given greater importance. If the content is viewed as being unrealistic, however, this may limit its influence on audiences.

A MEDIATING EFFECT

Perceived reality can mediate the effects of viewing sexual content on perceptions of sexual activities and attitudes. In one study, Ward and Rivadeneyra showed undergraduates clips of sexual situations (discussions of sexual encounters and relational conflicts) taken from popular situation comedies. The more viewers found the clips realistic, identified with the characters, and felt the actions could happen in their own lives, the higher their estimates of males' and peers' sexual experience. This was most noticeable for female participants. The type of content, however, can affect perceived realism judgments.

Taylor had college undergraduates watch video clips of popular television programs containing either visual depictions of sexual behaviors (pre- and post-intercourse scenes) or verbal discussions of sexual activity. He found that, regardless of group, adolescents who believed that the content was highly realistic were more likely to endorse sexually permissive

attitudes and were more accepting of sexual intercourse and oral sex in casual relationships.

Among the adolescents who watched the visual depictions, perceived realism did not significantly affect their beliefs about peers' sexual behaviors. However, among those viewing the verbal discussions, higher levels of perceived realism was linked to increased beliefs about the number of female, but not male, peers who were sexually active. This may reflect differences between the visual depictions, which involved fairly stereotypical heterosexual behaviors, and the verbal clips, which involved women who were encouraging a friend to be sexually active or describing their own sexual experiences. The impact of the perceived reality of verbal sexual content may be of particular importance given that content analyses have found that television programs include discussions of sex far more often than visual depictions and that these appear in the situation comedies that younger children watch.

In addition to affecting perceptions of others, perceived realism can also affect satisfaction with individuals' own sexual activities. Baran found that high school and college students' satisfaction with their virginity decreased as their identification with sexually active characters and perceptions of the accuracy of media portrayals of sexual behavior increased.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PERCEIVED REALITY

Researchers have also examined the factors influencing perceived realism. Adolescents' motivations for media use can affect realism judgments. Those who watch television to "learn about the world" have a higher perceived reality. Attitudes about sexual relationships can also affect perceived reality. In one study, adolescents who endorsed a recreational orientation toward relationships (relationships are a game or competition between men and women) were more likely to believe that sexual content was realistic. Conversely, those who endorsed a more traditional orientation (sex belongs primarily in marital relationships) gave lower ratings of perceived realism to sexual content.

Experience, including experience with the ethnic groups depicted, can also increase the audience's ability to judge the realism of television's sexual content. For example, Latina/o participants in one study gave higher ratings of perceived reality to programs showing primarily white characters. Sexual experience is also an important factor. Adolescents with limited sexual experience have a limited basis for comparison and may therefore be limited in their abilities to make critical judgments about sexual content.

Developmental age also influences the ability to make perceived reality judgments. Although extensive research has been conducted on the impact of cognitive development on realism judgments for other types of content, sexual content has received less attention. Granello, however, conducted a series of focus groups with girls ages 12, 16 to 17, and 21, examining their views of the dating relationships and behaviors in the television program, *Beverly Hills 90210*. The youngest girls believed the program showed teenagers "as they really" were. Girls in the 17-year-old group thought that although the show was not representative of their own lives, it was a realistic depiction of life in California. The 21-year-olds thought the program was unrealistic.

These studies suggest that perceptions of the reality of sexual content influence television's effects. Adolescents' perceived reality judgments are apparently complex and determined by a variety of motivational and experiential factors.

—T. Makana Chock

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Fantasy–Reality Distinction; Gender Roles on Television; Individual Differences, Media Preferences and; Media Effects; Media Effects, Models of; Movies, Perceived Realism of; Sex, Media Impact on; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Sex in Television, Incidence and Themes; Sexual Risk and Responsibility, Portrayals of; Soap Operas, Effects of

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SEXUAL CONTENT, AGE AND COMPREHENSION OF

Research into the impact of sexually oriented media messages on children and adolescents' sexual expectations, attitudes, and behaviors has always been closely related to the issue of how young viewers may understand these messages. Effects researchers have realized that viewers' ability to process, understand, and evaluate sexual content is likely to change throughout adolescence, and therefore, they have acknowledged that media effects may be different at different levels of maturity. For that reason, a number of studies have asked questions about whether and how young viewers comprehend sexually oriented contents; in most of these investigations, the concept of comprehension was understood in a broad sense, as beliefs about the content and reactions to its sexual nature. More specifically, a young viewer's response to sexual contents has been examined through studies that focus on one or two of four principal notions: (1) children and adolescents' comprehension of sexual innuendo, (2) their interpretations of what sexual messages may mean, (3) their emotional reactions to these contents, and (4) their judgments about the realism of the messages.

YOUNG VIEWERS' RESPONSES TO SEXUAL CONTENT

Comprehension

A notable example of the studies that explicitly focused on the issue of comprehension is the study of Silverman-Watkins and Sprafkin, using an observational learning perspective in which media effects are presented as a three-stage process of exposure, acquisition, and acceptance. The researchers focused on the second stage, examining whether children and adolescents understood references to sexuality in television programs. Their results indicated that 12-to-16-year-olds were able to work out the actual meaning of sexual allusions relatively well; a conclusion that was supported by a recent British qualitative study in 9-to-17-year-old schoolchildren. The comprehension scores were different, however, when a distinction is made between diverse types of sexual topics and when comprehension was examined in separate age groups. In the Silverman-Watkins and Sprafkin study, comprehension scores for allusions to intercourse were lower than scores for references to discouraged sexual practices (e.g., homosexuality). Furthermore, both pre- and postpubescent 12-year-olds experienced more difficulty in understanding sexual innuendo than 14- and 16-year-olds. In a more recent study, a group of 8-to-10-year olds was contrasted with viewers between 10 and 12; the latter category understood sexual jokes and innuendos, whereas the younger group reacted rather uncomfortably to the clips they were shown. Additional support for these conclusions was provided by Greenberg and his colleagues; they described that 14- and 15-year-old television viewers easily learned terms previously unheard of on the subjects of prostitution and homosexuality.

Interpretation

The second type of investigation examined how young viewers interpret sexually suggestive messages, including characteristics that contribute to individually different interpretations. Thompson and his colleagues, for instance, noted that the communication style in high school students' families was directly related to the cognitive activity with which they processed a music video about teenage pregnancy. Further studies concluded that inconsistent interpretations emerged in viewers of a different gender, race, or maturity level. Kalof found gender differences in how young viewers constructed the meaning of sexuality and power based on a Michael Jackson video. In a sample of 12-to-15-year-old females, girls who reached puberty earlier than average were more likely to interpret sexually oriented television messages as favorable toward teenage sex. Brown and Schulze reported that white females were more likely to believe that Madonna's "Papa Don't Preach" was about a girl who chose to keep her unborn child, whereas most black males in the study thought that the girl expressed her hopes not to be left by her boyfriend. Another study revealed that readings of sexual contents may also differ according to the sexual schemas and scripts that are used to interpret sexual episodes. Meischke explored how female college students understood the implicit fade-to-black part of a sexual act in an R-rated movie; they found that when the girls' interpretations related to the sexual act itself, they tended to rely on elements of the story. When their interpretations had to

do with safe-sex behaviors, however, viewers were more likely to fall back on generalizations about sexual behaviors in real life and in the movies rather than on observations of the plot.

Emotional Reactions

Cantor, Mares, and Hyde analyzed undergraduates' descriptions of a memorable encounter with sexual media in research that represents the category of studies that focuses on viewers' emotional reactions to sexual contents. They found that when respondents' memories went back to the period between 5 and 12 years of age, the reactions were often expressed in terms of guilt or confusion. Accounts of memories that dated from adolescence, on the other hand, regularly included feelings of anger or disgust. Brown, White, and Nikopoulou's study on 11-to-15-year-old girls' reactions produced comparable conclusions. Three distinctive styles of dealing with sexually suggestive media messages were revealed. A reaction of indifference and uninterest was typical of younger girls who did not regard media references to sexuality as relevant for their own lives. This type of reaction mostly occurred in prepubertal girls, who often preferred contents that reflect the value they attach to family and friends. A response of interest and even fascination was characteristic of adolescent females who actively search for information on sexuality, enjoy fantasizing about love and intimacy, and are attracted by behavioral models as presented in the media. These girls make use of mediated portrayals of sex and romance to construct a set of norms, perceptions, and values required for proper participation in adult romantic and sexual life. Finally, a reaction of resistance was typically found in females who had reached the stage of late puberty. These girls had learned about sexuality from experience in the dating arena and, often because of that, had reservations about the level of realism in sexual portrayals.

In Granello's interview study with female viewers of *Beverly Hills 90210*, a similar set of reactions was found. They could not be ascribed to similar ages, however. The 12-year-old respondents' particular interest in friendships between the female characters, their negligible consideration of story lines about male-female relationships, and the fairly small attention they paid to the physical appearance of the male characters corresponded to what the Brown, White, and Nikopoulou study described as the youngest viewers' reaction of uninterest. However, whereas Brown and her colleagues observed fascination as well as resistance in girls younger than 15, Granello detected these reactions only in 17- and 21-year-olds, respectively. The 17-year-old viewers of *Beverly Hills 90210* showed great curiosity about the sexual information that was presented and were thrilled by the attractiveness of the male characters; the 21-year-old women had clear doubts about the realism of the portrayals and called the male characters "boys" rather than "real men."

Judgment

Some of these studies either implicitly or explicitly have referred to a fourth dimension in comprehension research: young viewers' judgment about the realism of sexual portrayals. Both the research of Brown and her colleagues and of Granello pointed out that adolescents' realism beliefs declined as adolescents got older and their levels of sexual experience rose. Another study revealed that 19-to-24-year-old readers of teenage magazines had developed a clear disbelief in the content of sex-related articles, whereas the 13-to-18-year-olds reported only some reservations. This conclusion has been challenged, however. One study found that college students with higher levels of sexual experience believed that scenes from situation comedies such as *Roseanne* were more likely to happen in their own lives. According to Rehkoff's investigation, respondents in a committed relationship were more likely to perceive televised portrayals as realistic.

Summary

In summary, the overall trends indicate, first, that young viewers between the ages of 10 and 14 gradually start to comprehend sexual allusions. Furthermore, young girls' (but not necessarily young boys') emotional reactions to sexually oriented contents appear to follow a process of three stages. Parallel to these stages, skepticism about the realism of sexual media portrayals is likely to increase. Some studies suggest these processes largely to be driven by changes in adolescents' maturity. Other research, however, specified that developmental trends in young viewers' interpretations and reactions are not inevitably connected to their level of sexual experience.

AGE AND COMPREHENSION IN IMPACT STUDIES

Some of these conclusions occasionally return in studies examining the link between exposure to sexual contents and teenagers' attitudes, expectations, and behaviors. Findings about different responses when viewers differ in gender, sexual experience, and maturity have been adopted in impact studies. In a recent study by Eggermont, the association between television exposure and perceptions of peers' sexual activity was stronger in 12-year-old viewers at a more advanced level of pubertal development. Ward reported that experienced male students were more likely than inexperienced male students to accept stereotypes about sexual relationships. Studies also demonstrated that effects of sexually oriented media messages occur more consistently in female viewers than in male viewers.

Some effects studies, looking to take viewers' responses into account, include measurements of such concepts as perceived realism, identification, and viewing motives, known collectively as *viewer involvement.* According to Baran's studies, beliefs about the sexual competence of media characters and their sexual satisfaction are associated with negative attitudes toward remaining a virgin and less satisfaction with one's own sexual experiences. Ward and Rivadeneyra reported that realism perceptions significantly predicted greater levels of sexual experience. In women, they found that stronger identification was related to stronger endorsement of recreational attitudes about sex.

—Steven Eggermont

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Effects, Family Interactions and; Music Videos, Effects of; Schemas/Scripts, Sexual; Sex, Media Impact on; Sex in Television, Perceived Realism of; Sexual Risk and Responsibility, Portrayals of; Sexualization of Children; Soap Operas, Sexuality in

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SEXUAL INFORMATION, INTERNET AND

Although the Internet is a source of information about sex for many teens, little is known about the nature of that information. What is known suggests that information is somewhat limited and sometimes difficult to access, although this may be changing as more sex information geared toward teens is appearing on the Internet. Observational studies indicate that most teens employ relatively simplistic search strategies when seeking information on the Internet about health topics, including sex. Although information about sex is also gleaned from Internet pornography and exchanged through email, instant messages, and chat rooms, this entry focuses on static informational content provided on the World Wide Web. Although concerns about misinformation and sexual predators have led researchers to look at communication of sex information via the Internet, findings are only speculative at this point.

Nearly 9 in 10 adolescents (ages 12 to 17) have access to the Internet, and about three quarters of them have access at home. Nationwide surveys suggest that somewhere between one quarter and half of these online teens have sought out sexual health information via the Internet for themselves or for friends, with older teens and females searching significantly more often. In part, Internet use is likely an extension of the established tendency for teens to use independent reading to learn about many topics related to sex so that they can avoid judgments by parents, clergy, teachers, or peers. In addition to these considerations of privacy and confidentiality, teens also consider it easier and more convenient to access information on the Internet rather than from alternative expert sources such as consulting a physician; accessing information through the Internet is considered easy and convenient by most teens.

Few content analyses have explored sexual information available on the Internet, and existing studies may be of limited utility in understanding what is currently available due to the high rate of change in available content and search methods. The explosive expansion of the World Wide Web during the early part of the 21st century means that descriptions of content are rapidly outdated. Furthermore, the proliferation of pornographic content on the Web makes the systematic analysis of sexual information for teens difficult. For example, an early study of sexual information on the Web found that when young adults searched for information about STD symptoms, only 4% of web pages resulting from their searches were sex education pages; most were classified as pornography.

The few published content analyses of sexual information for teens available online suggest that sexual information for teens is available on the Internet but that it is generally incomplete and sometimes difficult to navigate. Most websites designed to provide sexual information to teens are produced by advocacy groups (e.g., the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States) or government groups (e.g., the Department of Health and Human Services). Many websites fail to clearly identify their affiliation or to provide detailed information about their authors and their credentials. Information on such sites focuses largely on sexual health, particularly on the prevention of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. Information about negotiating sexual behaviors with a partner, strategies for communicating about sex, and nuanced messages about the role of sex in relationships are generally lacking. Furthermore, content analyses suggest that the information about sex on the Internet may be difficult to access due to characteristics of the websites on which it is located. For example, most sites in published studies lacked an internal search mechanism or site map.

To understand what sexual information is actually accessed by teens, it is important to know how teens use the Internet to find information. Information science researchers have conducted numerous observational studies of adolescents to better understand their information-seeking behaviors. Most focus on searches for educational material, but the few studies that have observed youth searching for health information (including sexual health information) have

yielded similar results. The studies show that most adolescents use general purpose search engines (e.g., Yahoo!) and follow only the top 10 search results; they have difficulty formulating search queries due to misspellings and problems with the level of specificity; within a web page, they search less systematically than adults; they struggle with medical terminology; and they rarely evaluate the source of web pages. In addition to actively seeking sexual information online, survey data and focus group studies suggest that most teens have inadvertently stumbled across pornography online, often via unsolicited email or misleading links.

Unfortunately, little research has systematically measured the effects of Internet sexual information on teenage behavior. At present, surveys and focus groups are the only methods that researchers have used to measure teenagers' perceived reception of health information (only some of which is sexually related). Teenagers claim that they are able to find answers to their health questions nearly all of the time using the Internet and that the information they view is useful. However, their optimism may be overstated. Researchers have consistently found that although teens perceive the Internet as easy to use, in practice, they have difficulty using it appropriately and effectively.

According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, the majority of teenagers who have looked up health information online said that they talked to a friend or parent about what they found. A small but significant number (14%) mentioned that they visited a doctor because of what they saw online. Nearly 40% said that they changed their behavior in some way because of what they came across. Of course, these patterns were observed for health information in general and may not apply to sexual information in particular.

—Laramie D. Taylor and Derek L. Hansen

See also Internet Blocking; Internet Use, Positive Effects of; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of; Sexual Information, Teen Magazines and

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SEXUAL INFORMATION, TEEN MAGAZINES AND

Magazines are an important source of information about sex for young people, but the quality of that information is questionable. Lifestyle magazines designed for adolescent girls provide a substantial amount of sexual health information, but they focus more on sexual decision making in romantic relationships. Although no comparable magazines exist for a male audience, their nearest corollary, the so-called Lad magazines (e.g., *Maxim, Stuff,* and *FHM*), contain information about sexual pleasure and almost none about sexual health.

When teens and young adults are asked to indicate their first or predominant source of information for specific topics related to sex, they say that independent reading, including magazines, is a more important source of information than parents, peers, or schools. The same studies suggest that this is true for both young men and young women and for the sexually experienced as well as the less experienced. This importance is likely to reflect a number of factors, including teens' desire for privacy and need to avoid censure or punishment by parents, educators, or clergy. Getting information from magazines also allows teens to avoid revealing their relative ignorance of sexual matters to same-sex peers or romantic partners. Independent reading may also be perceived as a more reliable source of information; indeed, this seems to be justified, as learning about sex from independent reading has been found to be positively correlated with factual knowledge about sex, whereas learning from parents is negatively correlated with such knowledge.

Young people recognize their need to learn about sex. National surveys using representative samples of young people including teens have found that most want to receive more information about sexual health in general as well as specific sexual health topics, including symptoms, testing, and treatment of STDs; how to use condoms correctly; how sex, personal empowerment, and happiness fit together, and how to communicate with partners about sensitive sexual issues.

Magazines designed for and marketed to teens contain abundant information about sex, as do magazines that, although designed for young adults, are often read by teens. Several content analyses have examined the sexual content in magazines for teen girls (e.g., *YM, Seventeen,* and *Teen*). They generally find that the sexual information in such magazines is abundant but often problematic. Information about sexual health is not infrequent—on average, nearly half of all articles and columns dealing with sexual content focus on sexual health, and nearly 70% contain at least some mention of a sexual health topic. Common topics include pregnancy (especially unplanned pregnancy), contraception, STDs, and reproductive health care. Mention of abortion or childbirth is rare. Sexual health content increased slightly during the 1980s and 1990s. The quality of this information, however, is somewhat unclear. Existing analyses suggest that information about contraception and STDs tends to be general (e.g., one should use the former and avoid the latter) rather than specific and detailed.

Information about other sexual topics, however, increased dramatically over the same time period. Some of the more prevalent topics include sexual decision making, virginity, sexual attraction, and sexual techniques. Information about sexual decision making in magazines for adolescent girls tends to stress sexual restraint in the face of male sexual desire—girls are encouraged to be certain that they are emotionally ready for sex before relenting to the putatively relentless demands for sex from male romantic partners. At the same time, girls are encouraged to be sexually attractive and to seek out romantic partners.

Women's lifestyle magazines that are popular among older adolescents (e.g., *Cosmopolitan, Glamour*) contain an increasing amount of detailed information about sex, as well as information tailored to a presumably more sexually mature audience. Such magazines are more likely, for example, to discuss specific sexual techniques, cheating and monogamy, enhancing sex appeal, and planned pregnancy than are teen magazines. Unlike in teen magazines, sexual decision making is not an important topic in women's magazines.

In contrast to magazines marketed to adolescent girls, no lifestyle magazines are targeted at adolescent boys. Lad magazines are a genre that is targeted primarily at college-age men but nevertheless features a decidedly adolescent tone. Unlike magazines targeted at women and girls, Lad magazines contain very little information pertaining to sexual health. Instead, the most common topics addressed are women's sexual pleasure, improving the male sex life, unorthodox sexual behaviors and locations, and general sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, even information about women's sexual pleasure in these magazines is framed in terms of male sexual outcomes; information about what women want is presented as an effective way of getting more frequent or varied sex. Finally, although serious dating relationships are presented as the normative context for sexual behavior, these relationships are also portrayed ambivalently.

As discussed above, what little research is available on sexual information in magazines designed for and read by teens focuses on the specific topics included in such information. No published empirical research has addressed the quality or accuracy of the information contained in these magazines.

—Laramie D. Taylor

See also Magazines, Adolescent Boys'; Magazines, Adolescent Girls'; Sexual Information, Internet and

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SEXUAL MINORITIES, PORTRAYALS OF

When sexual minorities are portrayed in the mass media, these portrayals generally exclude children or adolescents, either questioning their sexuality or

identified as homosexual. Although occasionally high school students or other under-18-year-old characters are depicted as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered (GLBT), various fears about mixing adolescence and homosexuality have prevented a more full exploration of this topic.

Much research in this area has instead focused on how the growing number of mostly adult sexual-minority portrayals in media serves as a source of information for children or adolescents who might be questioning their assumed heterosexuality. In specific, portrayals of sexual minorities in the media are considered to be an important tool of socialization for GLBT adolescents. Unlike other traditionally under-represented groups, for example, racial or religious minorities, GLBT individuals assume their identity in late adolescence and largely apart from an intact support network. For this reason, many sexual minorities turn to mass media for portrayals of individuals that might reflect their same sexual orientation. Research has discovered, for instance, that after the character played by a young actor on a popular daytime soap opera "came out" as gay, the (heterosexual) actor playing the part received letters from teenagers who commented that his character was the only person they could talk to about their own sexual orientation. Research has shown that, in addition to individuals using media portrayals of sexual minorities as role models, parents and family members who are dealing with the realization that a family member may be gay use media stereotypes to find about a community they typically do not encounter overtly.

Because media portrayals of sexual minorities are often the first experience of a GLBT individual that an adolescent experiences, much research has focused on critical readings of the growing number of GLBT characters in fictional and reality-based media. In general, the range of portrayals is considered to be extremely limited. Content analysis of media texts has found that sexual minorities are depicted largely as villains or victims and are often relegated to a type of "problem status." Homosexuality, in other words, is something to be dealt with, and not simply a normalized part of a character's overall identity.

Other studies have stressed that sexual minorities are relegated to supporting characters and rarely assume a leading role. Moreover, many of the homosexual characters are played by heterosexual actors, providing few real-life role models for questioning youth. Although the number of sexual minorities depicted in film and television dramatically increased in the 1990s, with programs such as *Ellen*, *Will & Grace,* and *Dawson's Creek*, these representations tended to be comedic, one-dimensional, or largely asexual.

Studies have shown that young people generally consider the mass media to be as valuable as parents or peers when it comes to acquiring sexual education, so the lack of actual sexual portrayals of GLBT characters in the media is problematic. In particular, GLBT teens portrayed in the media are largely denied the opportunity to engage in the same sexual situations as their heterosexual counterparts. Because the ensemble casts of youth programs typically feature only one sexual minority character, the romantic possibilities for that character are dramatically limited in comparison with heterosexual friends.

Beyond script logistics, research has also focused on how advertisers' fears of public backlash over explicit homosexual content have made programmers and producers shy away from events like two men kissing. While two women are frequently allowed to engage in sexual contact (presumably for the enjoyment of male viewers), scholars have noted that kisses between men are not only rare but also rarely romantic. For instance, when Jack McFarland kissed Will Truman on the sitcom *Will & Grace,* the lip-lock, although involving two gay men, was strictly platonic. While films like *Philadelphia* and *The Birdcage* enjoyed commercial box office success, research has focused on how even these GLBT-friendly films portray a sanitized and extremely cautious version of gay life to mass audiences. Many times, in films such as *Brokeback Mountain,* the lead homosexual characters are played by heterosexual actors who routinely discuss the challenges of "playing gay" on screen, thereby reinforcing stigmas against homosexuality even while the film itself offers a sympathetic portrayal of GLBT characters.

Nonadvertiser-supported television is able to push boundaries in terms of sexual content; however, programs like Showtime's *Queer as Folk* are not always widely available to young audiences. Industry analysis of media portrayals makes clear that in comparison with advertising-supported media, subscription or other revenue-based networks are able to more fully address the experiences of GLBT characters. On *Queer as Folk*, for example, the character of Justin began the series as a 17-year-old who was involved sexually with an older man. Throughout the series, viewers saw Justin confronting homophobia at home and in school, exploring his newfound gay identity, and submersing himself in an urban gay subculture.

Research on the portrayals of sexual minorities has also found that reality programs are more likely to depict multidimensional GLBT characters. The MTV program *The Real World*, as an example, not only has regularly featured GLBT cast members, but also has often explored the intersections of sexuality, race, and class. Pedro Zamora, a Latino male who was HIV-positive, broke new ground in commercial television during the program's third season. This is particularly notable as the television reality counts primarily teens and preteens as its core audience.

Whereas academic scholarship has focused primarily on the lack of positive portrayals of sexual minorities in the media, conservative policy groups like Focus on the Family and the Christian Coalition of America have campaigned against GLBT characters and story lines. Recently, the Rev. Jerry Falwell suggested that the children's program, *Teletubbies,* contained a hidden homosexual agenda represented by the purple Teletubby, Tinky Winky. Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family also implicated SpongeBob SquarePants, Jimmy Neutron, and Barney in a similar scheme of promoting homosexuality to children. Interest groups that promote positive portrayals of GLBT characters, such as the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), also regularly conduct research that aims to have an effect on producers of media content.

As homosexuality gains acceptance in wider social contexts, it is hypothesized that the portrayals of GLBT characters in media will develop more fully.

—David Gudelunas

See also Gender Identity Development; HIV/AIDS, Media Prevention Programs and; Parasocial Interaction; Sex, Media Impact on; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Sex in Television, Perceived Realism of; Socialization and Media

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SEXUAL RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY, PORTRAYALS OF

While a large body of research funded by the Kaiser Family Foundation has shown that televised portrayals of sex and sexuality are common across the television landscape, this same research has also indicated that portrayals of sexual risk and responsibility topics (e.g., abstinence, condom use, safe sex) are noticeably lacking. Thus, while watching television, young people are learning incomplete scripts for sexual behavior. Many adolescents have multiple sexual partners and report using condoms inconsistently, if at all. Sexual risk-taking among adolescents is a public health concern. Although there are numerous explanations for sexual risk-taking behavior, media portrayals of "unsafe sex" have been implicated, and it is important to examine portrayals of sexual risk and responsibility messages on television in this connection.

The media play an important role in the sexual socialization of adolescents. Research demonstrates that adolescents' attitudes can be influenced by sexual portrayals on television and that they can learn from these depictions as well. The media provide adolescents with scripts for sexual encounters. Adolescents can learn everything from how to ask someone on a date to when it is appropriate to engage in sexual intercourse and what sexual precautions, if any, one should take.

However, research suggests that only 5% of all scenes containing sexual content contain any messages about sexual risks and responsibilities. Sexual risk and responsibility topics can be grouped into three broad categories: messages about sexual precaution, depictions of the risks or negative consequences of sex, and messages pertaining to sexual patience. The most frequently occurring of these three topics concerns sexual precautions, such as the use of a condom or other contraceptive strategy or mentions of "safe sex." Depictions of the risks/negative consequences of sexual behavior (e.g., worry about or actual occurrence of STDs, pregnancy) occurred in 2% of all scenes with sexual content. Portrayals that incorporate a theme related to sexual patience are found in only about 1% of scenes with sexual content. Examples in this category include abstinence, virginity, or simply waiting until one feels ready for a sexual relationship.

It should be noted that not all scenes with sexual content are necessarily at the level where sexual health and safety messages are appropriate. These concerns

are most salient in scenes or programs that present advanced sexual content. Programs that have content related to sexual intercourse (an actual or implied depiction or a discussion of sexual intercourse) seem the most relevant context for this type of information. It is encouraging to note that, in fact, 25% of all programs with this type of advanced sexual content do contain messages related to sexual risk or responsibility.

Another salient context for including safer-sex messages is programs that are popular with teenagers. These programs tend to have significantly higher levels of sex when compared to the amounts found in industry-wide programming. However, close to half of teen shows with advanced sexual content feature a sexually responsible message. This indicates some sensitivity on the part of television producers to the need to expose adolescents to these important messages. However, this still leaves more than half of these shows without any mention of sexual risk or responsibility.

The context of a media portrayal is known to be an important variable in the effects process, so in addition to understanding the frequency with which these messages are portrayed on television, it is also important to understand *how* they are portrayed. Unfortunately, research indicates not only that safe-sex references are infrequent but also that they tend to be a minor or inconsequential part of the entire scene; they are almost as likely to be portrayed with a negative, dismissive tone as with a positive one.

In summary, although sex on television is frequent, mentions of sexual risk and responsibility topics are rare and when these important topics are raised, they are often treated in a way that minimizes their importance. The concern is that young people may internalize and model an incomplete sexual script or one that dismisses the importance of sexual risk and responsibility concerns.

—Kirstie Farrar

See also Movies, Sexuality in; Public Health Campaigns; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Schemas/Scripts, Sexual; Sex, Media Impact on; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Sexual Information, Internet and

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SEXUALIZATION OF CHILDREN

The sexualization of children is a broad concept that refers to the representation and treatment of children as objects of eroticism or sex. Such representation and treatment ranges from fashion and advertising to juridical issues of child pornography, child prostitution, sex trafficking, statutory rape, and child sexual abuse. The sexualization of children is a phenomenon that has attracted legal and social attention but remains controversial. Some legislation protects children from certain forms of sexualization, yet the boundaries between pornographic and nonpornographic activities and representations remain gray, and their impacts continue to be debated.

Legally, the sexualization of minor children is governed in most countries by criminal and civil codes that define the legitimacy of sexual acts involving children below a certain age. This age of consent varies widely, from as low as 12 up to 21. The sexual abuse of children is thus a concept that is varyingly interpreted, with even the word *child* or *minor* defined according to a nonstandard range of criteria.

This lack of consensus has given rise to controversy about the sexual exploitation of children. Laws governing the sexual exploitation of children have emerged over the past century, addressing various aspects of childhood sexuality and the sexualization of children; but there are ongoing public debates about what constitutes normalcy, delinquency, and abuse. In general, the sexual activity of minors is illegal, as is the sexual activity of adults with minors, which is always understood to be coercive. Similarly, the use of minors for purposes of prostitution or sex trafficking is a felony in most countries. These are all instances of the sexualization of children.

The United Nations has recognized the sexualization of children in these forms as a human rights issue. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 34) contains clear language prohibiting

the sexual exploitation of children and includes protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography.

The issues are less clear regarding the sexualized representation of children. In April 2002, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition* that the representation of children engaged in sex acts is legally permissible as long as real children are not used in the portrayals. However, this ruling is being contested; in April 2003, the Protect Act of 2003 was signed into law, and one of its provisions is for increased penalties for child exploitation and child pornography, including those using virtual imagery.

The sexualization of children outside the realm of pornography is also a pressing social concern. The fashion industry has been widely criticized for promoting hypersexual clothing for children, as have advertising and marketing campaigns featuring sexualized minors. Icons of popular culture, including pop singers and actors, are also held responsible for disseminating sexually charged content to children.

Most academic research on the topic characterizes such representations as a risk, both to the children and to society. Two recent studies conclude that such representation conveys to children the idea that sexual displays are condoned by adults and contributes in general to the victim-blaming myth that children *want* to be sexually used by adults. Other studies have noted the similarities between mainstream images of sexualized children and pornography, finding that such images normalize and sanction adult sexual interest in minors.

Research on the effects of such representation also finds that exposure to such media content increases sexual activity among minors, can lead to sex work, and is used by pedophiles for purposes of arousal.

One analysis of these images points out the contradiction between the legislation and social concern about child sexual abuse and the widespread exhibition of sexualized children's bodies in advertising, films, beauty pageants, and other mediated forums.

This ambivalence has brought up related legal questions, such as Is all visual representation of children's nudity de facto sexual? Current studies seek to delineate a distinction between sexual and nonsexual representations of children's bodies, as well as the private/public distinctions that might shape their interpretations.

A related body of research views the furor over sexualized imagery and the attendant harms to children as a kind of moral panic, arguing that children's sexuality can and should be publicly represented in healthy and progressive ways.

—Meenakshi Gigi Durham

See also Advertising, Sexuality in; Chat Rooms; Child Pornography; Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Obscenity, Pornography, Internet; Pornography, U.S. Public Policy on; Sex, Internet Solicitation of; Sexualized Violence; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE

Violent pornography is widespread and easily accessible through films, magazines, and the Internet. *Forbes* magazine recently estimated the pornographic industry to be worth more than $56 billion. Pornography involving violence (i.e., sexualized violence) is thought by many to be highly offensive, abhorrent, and out-of-place in civilized society. Recent analyses reveal that sexual violence abounds in the pornographic industry, with violence being shown in about 25% of pornographic videos and magazines and in about 42% of pornography on the Internet. Although there is a paucity of research concerning the effects on children and adolescents of viewing violent pornography, the available research suggests that such exposure may result in problems in sexual development and may increase the risk of their acting in sexually violent ways.

Outside the research community, various individuals have claimed that pornography is a cause of violent behavior. One notable example is serial killer Ted Bundy, who killed at least 28 women or girls before his capture and subsequent execution in a Florida State Prison in January 1989. In an interview with Dr. James Dobson on the night before his execution, Bundy described his exposure as a 13-year-old to soft-core pornographic material in a dumpster near his home. Bundy claimed that after this first experience with pornography, he immediately became addicted, seeking depictions of more graphic and explicit violent behavior on television and in other materials. He blamed pornographic violence in the media for turning him into a killer.

Although Bundy was adamant about the destructive effects of viewing sexualized violence on television, research has revealed a less than clear picture. To discover exactly how violent pornography influences children and adolescents is a very difficult task. Controlled experimental studies that expose children to violent pornography and then observe their subsequent behavior would be unethical and have not been conducted. Therefore, the influence of violent pornography on children and adolescents has been examined using two related approaches. The first involves correlational studies that examine pornography use in sex offenders (both adult and juvenile). As many convicted sex offenders are first exposed to violent pornography early in their youth and begin to offend about the same time, these studies are relevant to the current discussion. The second involves a wide range of experimental studies that focus on the effect of viewing violent pornography on adults (mostly college-age men).

Mike Allen and colleagues have conducted a number of meta-analyses that combine the results of all the studies conducted on the effect of viewing pornography. These studies revealed that convicted sex offenders are more likely than noncriminals to perform a sexual act, such as masturbation, consensual sex, or criminal sex, after viewing pornography. Interestingly, physiological studies have found that sex offenders are more aroused after viewing violent pornography than nonoffenders, yet are less aroused after viewing pornography depicting consensual sex. The picture is less clear with regard to pornographic use among juvenile sex offenders. Although there is very little research on this topic, recent studies estimate that about 30% to 89% of juvenile sex offenders regularly view pornographic materials. On average, those who view pornography are likely to start viewing about 11 to 12 years old. Interestingly, when asked if viewing pornography influenced their sexual deviance, 90% felt that it had no effect on their behavior. It should be noted that the above studies dealt with all forms of pornography and unfortunately did not specify if the pornography was violent or not.

A review of experimental studies with adults revealed that participants hold more favorable attitudes concerning sexual aggression after viewing violent pornography in the laboratory. They are more likely to endorse rape myths (e.g., "Women incite men to rape") and have less sympathy for victims of sexual aggression. Furthermore, participants exposed to sexual pornography are more likely to be aggressive in a laboratory setting than those not exposed. In a typical study, participants are randomly assigned to a group (i.e., control, pornography, or violent pornography) and view a video according to their group assignment. Later, participants are told that they will be participating in another supposedly unrelated study, usually involving a teacher/learner paradigm where they are able to "punish" another participant, often with supposed electrical shocks or blasts of noise. Related factors, such as initial level of aggression and previous experience with pornography, are typically taken into account to try to ensure that these factors do not influence results. These studies may not apply to real-life experience, but they do allow researchers to study the effects of viewing violent pornography in a controlled situation.

So, how does viewing violent pornography influence sexual aggression and attitudes? When aroused after viewing any kind of pornography, an individual is likely to want to act on those feelings. Most people feel that it is acceptable to engage in consensual sexual relations after viewing pornography; in fact, many couples use pornography as a tool to enhance their sexual relationship with one another. However, this becomes a problem when a person is aroused by viewing violent sex, as it is certainly not socially acceptable and usually is illegal to engage in the kind of behavior that is being portrayed. This is where a dilemma comes in, one of control issues versus self-gratification.

Children and adolescents who view violent pornography are probably more at risk than adults who view such material. The Internet allows many children and adolescents access to violent pornography, which previously would have been difficult for them to obtain. Exposure to such pornography may interfere with the course of natural sexual development and may inappropriately accelerate sexual relationships. As specified earlier, controlled experimental studies have not examined this issue due to ethical reasons. However, there is a vast amount of research studying the effects of exposure to violent TV on children and adolescents. These studies reveal that exposure to violent TV at a young age can have a fairly large impact on immediate and future aggression, both in attitudes and behavior. Similarly, viewing violent pornography may prime an individual to behave in a sexually violent way in the short term and may create a network of sexually violent scripts to guide behavior in the long term.

Although the research on the effects of violent pornography on children and adolescents is limited, research from a variety of fields suggests that youth are highly at risk after viewing such material. The best way to protect children and adolescents is to limit *any* exposure.

—Sarah M. Coyne

See also Child Pornography; Cognitive Script Theory; Cuing and Priming; Pornography (various entries); Priming Theory

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SITCOMS

Situation comedies, often referred to as sitcoms, have been a major staple program type for television networks; sitcoms are the only genre represented in the Top-10 rated programs every year since 1949. The sitcom is an extremely popular genre both for viewing audiences and for television advertisers. The context is light and often humorous, and the characters are generally easy to identify with. Although the content of sitcoms has varied over the decades, the genre has remained a constant favorite. Much research has been conducted on the type of messages that are contained in sitcom content, which includes a variety of images that are important in terms of their impact on children and adolescents. The domestic situation comedy, or family sitcom, has a long history of depicting and transmitting images of American families into viewers' homes. Sitcoms also are a source of gender images and sibling relationships.

SITCOM FORMAT AND AUDIENCE

The format of sitcoms generally features a recurring cast. Each half-hour episode establishes a situation, a complication arises, confusion and humor develop among the characters, and then the situation is usually resolved before the episode ends. Unlike dramatic series, which are often open-ended, conflict does not commonly carry over between episodes in sitcoms. In most situation comedies, character development is usually downplayed in favor of plot twists and humorous situations, making the characters relatively simple and predictable. Characters generally remain largely

consistent through an entire series and may often seem a bit silly and contrived. Shows such as *I Love Lucy* from the 1950s, *Happy Days* from the 1970s, and *Seinfeld* from the 1990s all fit into the genre of sitcoms.

Sitcoms are among the most watched programs for families, especially those shows that appeal to children as well as adults. Shows such as *Full House* and *The Cosby Show* have been among the most popular sitcoms on television for children, according to the Nielsen ratings. Specifically, *The Cosby Show* was the highest rated program from 1985 through 1990 as a result of its appeal to children and adults alike. From 1989 through 1995, *Full House* was consistently rated within the top 30 programs on television due to its popularity with young audience members. More recently, sitcoms such as *Malcolm in the Middle* have also been popular largely among child viewers.

Analysis of the advertising revenue and program content on television broadcasting channels indicates that advertisers pay premium prices to air their ads during sitcoms. The reasons are generally thought to be that advertisers prefer programs that are light and not challenging in order to set a positive mood for their selling messages; in addition, sitcoms often appeal to broad audiences. It is to the benefit of advertisers that sitcoms remain a popular genre among audiences.

SITCOM CONTENT

Portrayals of Families

Between 1947 and 1990, 85% of families on television were shown in a comedy format during prime time. The number of fictional television series featuring a family as the primary story vehicle nearly doubled from 1950 to 1990, with more than half of those shows in each decade falling into the sitcom category. Plots of this type, depicting fictional families, are believed to carry with them implicit lessons about family life and family member roles for their viewing audiences. Although it may be speculative to draw conclusions from content to effects, exposure to such programming has been shown to change the way viewers think about real-life families, specifically in regard to ideas about marriage, family, and divorce. The portrayal of family roles in television programs may be especially influential for children, based on their limited experience with various family types, level of television exposure, and susceptibility to the influence of role models. Their expectations about their real-life family may be affected by this televised information. In a study conducted by Olson and Douglas of second, sixth, and tenth graders, the majority of respondents said that all real-life families were like those in the family series they watched most often (*The Cosby Show* and *Family Ties* were identified with the most regularity) and that the emotions of the characters were portrayed realistically in these shows.

Gender Roles

Studies indicate that depictions of gender roles have fluctuated over time, with peaks in character happiness or satisfaction and family stability ratings at the highest during the 1950s and mid-1980s. More recent domestic comedies contain less positive depictions of varying gender roles, specifically displaying more male dominance and less satisfaction and stability in families. Recent depictions of families indicate that characters are more distressed and less desirable. As another sign of shifting gender roles on sitcoms, Erica Scharrer examined long-running and top-rated domestic sitcoms from the 1950s through the 1990s in an exploratory content analysis, finding that modern television fathers and working-class television fathers are more likely to be portrayed foolishly than sitcom fathers of the past or fathers of higher socioeconomic classes. Sitcom fathers are often presented as the target of a growing number of jokes and in situations that make them look increasingly foolish, such as on the sitcom *Home Improvement*. This research demonstrates that joke telling by sitcom characters, often directed toward the father characters, can potentially be viewed as a shift of power between the sexes on these programs.

Sibling Interactions

Sibling interactions on sitcoms have also undergone an apparent transformation over the years, according to research by Larson. Child characters in 1950s situation comedies such as *Leave It to Beaver*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, and *Father Knows Best* interacted less often than children in 1980s programs such as *The Cosby Show*, *Growing Pains*, and *Family Ties*. This is partly due to the fact that advertisers had not yet developed children as a target market in the earlier years. However, the 1950s characters were shown more positively when interacting with each other,

whereas in programs of the 1980s, greater amounts of conflict were present among sitcom siblings.

—*Andrea M. Bergstrom*

See also Family, Television Portrayals of; Fathers, Media Portrayals of; Mothers, Media Portrayals of

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SOAP OPERAS, CONTENT ANALYSES OF

Daytime serial dramas, or soap operas, emerged from radio programming of the 1940s and 1950s and became a popular genre among housewives and retirees. The pace of these serial dramas is often quite slow, with more talk than action and with a focus on interpersonal relationships. Over recent decades, the content of soap operas has become edgier, attracting adolescents and college students. Because of their increasing popularity, devoted viewers, and expanding audiences, researchers have begun to examine the specific nature of their content and to ask whether it is appropriate for younger viewers.

This question drives many content analyses of daytime soap operas. For these analyses, researchers record a selection of soap opera programming, typically 1 week, and then systematically analyze the programs for the presence of specific behavior or themes. Alternatively, some analyze soap opera digests that offer summaries of each day's episodes. The intent of either approach is to document the frequency or prevalence of specific actions, themes, or attributes. In general, findings paint the soap opera world as one dominated by white, middle- to upper-class, attractive professionals. Nonwhites accounted for only 3% to 5% of all soap opera characters in early analyses and nearly 15% in more recent studies. Unlike all other TV genres, however, men and women typically appear in equal numbers on soaps, although women tend to be younger than men. The majority of soap opera characters (75%) are between 20 and 50, with only 1% of major characters over age 65.

A common focus of soap operas is romantic and sexual relationships. Indeed, recent findings from Dale Kunkel and his colleagues show that soaps are the genre for which the highest percentage of programs (96%) contain sexual content. As such, the bulk of the existing content analyses focus on sexual content. For these analyses, researchers first develop a list of sexually intimate behaviors, such as passionate kissing, unmarried intercourse, and prostitution, and then analyze multiple episodes to document the number of times these behaviors are displayed visually or mentioned verbally. Additional characteristics of sexual content are sometimes noted, including sex, age, race, and marital status of the participants; nature of the relationship between participants (e.g., strangers, married); and tone of the interaction. Several common findings emerge. First, sexual references are more often verbal than visual. Verbal references to unmarried intercourse are particularly common; references to prostitution, homosexuality, and STD prevention are less frequent. When sexual content is visual, it tends to be passionate kissing or erotic touching; physical representations of sexual intercourse are rare. Second, findings indicate that verbal or visual sexual references have increased from about 2 per hour in the early 1980s to 5 to 8 by the late mid-1990s. A 2003 programming analysis put this rate at 5.1 scenes per hour. Finally, such content occurs more frequently in reference to unmarried intercourse than married intercourse.

A second focus of soap opera content analyses is the prevalence of substance use, particularly alcohol, described as the most frequently used drug on television. Studies have investigated the frequency with

which alcoholic drinks are consumed or discussed, settings and circumstances under which such behavior occurs, reasons alcohol is consumed, and any apparent consequences of drinking. Several findings have emerged. First, alcohol portrayals are quite common, but they are less frequent on daytime soaps than in prime-time programming. Studies report that incidents of alcohol use appear 1.5 to 3 times per half hour in American soaps and 6.4 times per hour in British soaps, where many scenes take place in pubs. Second, in terms of context, the majority of drinking characters are male, and much drinking takes place in the home (in American soaps). Third, drinking is most frequently depicted as serving social facilitation purposes (e.g., wine with dinner, cocktails at a party), and such behavior is either reinforced or meets no consequences. Drinking to escape reality is the second most common reason for drinking, especially among alcoholics. This is typically frowned on and meets with concern; drinking to intoxication is often negatively reinforced. Yet overall, soap opera drinking is somewhat common yet typically moderate and problem free, with minimal depiction of the consequences of drinking, especially any negative health consequences.

A third issue frequently analyzed is the nature of portrayals of health and mental health problems, which are major themes on soap operas. Here, findings indicate that these portrayals tend to focus more on the extreme than on the mundane. Homicide, suicide, shootings, and rape occur more frequently in soaps than in real life. Mary Cassata and colleagues found that 41% of all health-related occurrences are accidents and that accidents account for about 65% of soap opera fatalities. Closer analyses of soap opera crime indicate that deceit, murder, and premarital/extramarital sex are the most frequently occurring moral issues. Reproductive issues are also exaggerated. Pregnancy and delivery complications are common, and most deliveries are premature or occur in unusual locations. Findings also indicate a high rate of psychiatric disorders. One study found that psychiatric disorders were the second most commonly occurring health-related condition. Unfortunately, distortions of mental health experiences do occur, including an overrepresentation of women among the mentally ill (75%), minimal depiction of effective treatments, and frequent associations with criminal behavior (among male characters).

Given that soap operas are characterized as being heavy on talk and low on action, a final domain of content analyses has focused on examining soap opera conversations. Here the goal is to examine topics of conversation, participants, and appropriateness of the conversations. More than half of all dyadic conversations are reported to be mixed sex, and participants are most often personal friends, blood relatives, marriage partners, or coworkers. Common topics of conversation include business matters, family relationships, health, and romantic relationships, with small talk peppered within and across most conversations. Small sex differences have also emerged: Male characters are more likely to discuss professional relationships, business matters, and deviant behavior, and female characters are more likely to discuss family and romantic relationships, health, and domestic matters. Character gender has been shown to affect patterns of advising and ordering, as well. Together, these content analyses illustrate the unique and somewhat conflicting nature of soap operas, whose conversations often touch on the mundane but whose plot twists and story lines demonstrate a thirst for drama and flair.

—L. Monique Ward and Dana S. Levin

See also Research Methods, Content Analyses; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Soap Operas, Effects of; Soap Operas, Sexuality in

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SOAP OPERAS, EFFECTS OF

Soap operas have existed almost as long as radio and television have. The term *soap opera* is, however, not used all over the world; in Latin America, the most

popular corresponding program genre is the *telenovela*, and in Asia, it is drama serials. The narrative of soap operas differs from that of *telenovelas* and Asian drama serials in several ways; one of the most conspicuous differences is that the soap opera consists of an ongoing, "open" story that may continue for many years whereas *novelas* and drama serials last for only a limited number of episodes. Although U.S. serials are distributed widely around the world, there is even wider global circulation of serials made in certain other cultures, especially in Latin America and most of all in Brazil. Australia, the United Kingdom, and several Asian countries (e.g., South Korea) are great exporters of soap operas, as well.

Recently, local and internationally exported soap operas, *telenovelas,* and drama serials, often attracting large audiences, have become more and more common around the world, not least because of the explosive spread of cable and satellite television in the 1980s and 1990s. In several countries, men and young people are an increasingly large part of the audience for these fictional serials, which previously were viewed mainly by women. Many soaps, *telenovelas,* and drama serials have also become increasingly daring, sometimes showing in a single or a few episodes more about sex, divorce, deceit, revenge, power struggle, shady economic transactions, crime, and so on than a person experiences in her or his whole life.

RESEARCH ON YOUTH AND SOAP OPERAS

Although there has been extensive research on adult viewers of soap operas, especially women, relatively few studies exist on soap operas and children or adolescents. A survey of research studies around the world shows clear cultural differences not only between soap operas, *telenovelas*, and drama serials, and the contents of such programs produced in different countries, but also in children's or young people's reception and meaning-making of the programs. The research contributions described in this entry should, therefore, be regarded as case studies, the findings of which cannot be empirically generalized across borders.

The research approach of these studies in Asia, Australia, Europe, and Latin America is often of a qualitative and short-term character, especially within the tradition of reception studies, in which children or adolescents tell from their own perspectives how they read and are influenced by the programs. Some studies, especially in the United States, aim to analyze specific influences of soaps (e.g., on young people's beliefs) from a cultivation, effect, socialization, or similar perspective. How much, and in what directions, the serials influence young people in the long term cannot be inferred from existing research.

EFFECTS OF SOAP OPERA VIEWING

Even if everyone makes something different out of the programs, the reception studies give rise to some general conclusions. First, these studies confirm that many young people in many countries watch soap operas/*telenovelas*/drama serials, often from an early age. Besides getting pleasure, excitement, and sometimes laughter from viewing these fictional serials, children and young people report that the programs give them ideas, advice, and insight into life and people—especially with reference to interpersonal relations and interactions—that can be useful now and when getting older. In addition to learning, the programs have a range of social functions: Young people identify and parasocially interact with certain characters, situations, and values; distance themselves from others; check out how characters' behavior works; or think about how they themselves would behave in corresponding situations. They also talk about the serials with others. Therefore, several researchers conclude, by watching, learning from, and talking about these TV fictions, young people are working with their social identity and exploring ways of coping with issues in their own lives, at present and later on. Some children say that the serials also influence them in other ways.

The cultivation and effect studies often focus on soap opera viewing and adolescents' perceptions of personal relations, gender roles, sexual behaviors, marriage, motherhood, social issues (e.g., divorce, abortion, crime), occupations, and the like. Several studies have found relations between how these phenomena are represented in the television world and adolescents' notions of the same phenomena in social reality, thus supporting hypotheses that the glamorous/exaggerated/distorted television portrayals nourish false beliefs and unrealistic expectations about the social world. On the other hand, it is often impossible to assume one-sided causality because people with certain views and motivations also actively select and watch material of interest to them. (For example, those with idealized views of marriage may selectively

choose romanticized media content.) Generally, what young people choose to watch are programs and elements that relate to their own lives, so their readings of the programs and what they learn from them are often deeply rooted in the contexts in which they live. Often, then, there is a reciprocal relation between what people seek from the media and how media may reinforce and develop perceptions, a process that is also modified by the viewer's own practice and peers and adults in her or his own environment.

There are significant age differences in children's and young people's meaning-making, and research shows how factors such as gender, personality, peers, family integration, and social class reflect different needs and play a role in the interpretation and cultivation processes. For instance, media researcher Maya Götz finds an age-typical development of enthusiasm for soap operas in Germany. For children ages 6 to 9, regular reception of a daily soap is integrated into the family routine as a "bedtime story" and an opportunity to exchange views on the more adult world. Increasingly, among preteens ages 10 to 13, the daily soap becomes an information resource, a kind of "window on the adult world." Slightly older children, ages about 12 to 15, recognize in the characters parts of themselves as well as their newly developing philosophy of life, while distancing themselves from other philosophies or personalities portrayed; they often identify with a particular character. It is primarily 14-to-15-year-old girls who develop a particular emotional involvement with soaps and admit to being "addicted" to them. In such cases, daily viewing of the soap opera becomes a vehemently demanded, zealously guarded retreat that young adolescent girls create for themselves (mostly watching the soap alone) in order to remain in contact with their own feelings and knowledge about relationships. Among older adolescents, ages 16 to 19, there is a lighter appropriation of the genre, together with a more distant attitude. The family now tends to be increasingly reintegrated into the sharing of enthusiasm for the soap, although the fantasies and emotional participation are remembered and continued.

SOAP OPERAS FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

In many countries, especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, producers attempt to take advantage of the functionality of media in tackling social ills and motivating young people. The goal is to use the format of radio and TV drama, soap operas, *telenovelas*, docu-soaps, and other entertaining genres for education to raise debate and contribute to solving health and other problems in society. The use of entertainment-education in an integrated manner and often in the form of multimedia initiatives has been growing significantly over the past decade, notably in addressing health-related issues such as HIV/AIDS. The ideal communicative scenario in this respect is communication for social change, that is, to deal with the challenge of providing an information- and dialogue-rich enabling environment where the media contents contribute to empowering the audiences in facing health-related and other social issues in everyday life.

One of hundreds of such programs is the youth-oriented South African drama series *Yizo Yizo*. The show has extremely high audience ratings and aims to reflect reality (ordinary black South Africans living in townships) rudely and toughly (portraying children's experiences of formal schooling, including violence, sexual harassment and rape, and drug abuse). Research indicates that the series succeeds to a great extent in revealing the depth and complexity of social crises and raising debate and action in society. This entertainment series represents an approach to citizenship and communication for social change that seriously challenges the contents of many soap operas and reality TV programs invented in richer countries.

—Cecilia von Feilitzen

See also Cultivation Theory; Entertainment-Education, International; Media Effects; Reality TV; Soap Operas, Content Analyses of; Socialization and Media

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SOAP OPERAS, SEXUALITY IN

Television soap operas have been a broadcast entertainment staple for 50 years, and radio soaps began two decades earlier. At least 23 million adult Americans are daily viewers of one or more TV soaps, and as many as 30 million claim to be regular viewers. Add to those figures a few million teen and preteen viewers and the massive reach of soaps is evident. The general trend from a variety of research perspectives has identified an increase in overall sexual content, particularly sexual intercourse, an increase in visual depictions of sex, and a strong emphasis on sexual activities among unmarried partners.

Across different analyses of sexual content in television soap operas, there is considerable symmetry in what has been called *sex.* Typically, sex includes depicted behaviors or verbal references to intercourse, some form of foreplay, erotic kissing, and more recently, incidents of homosexuality, in addition to such criminal sexual activities as prostitution and rape.

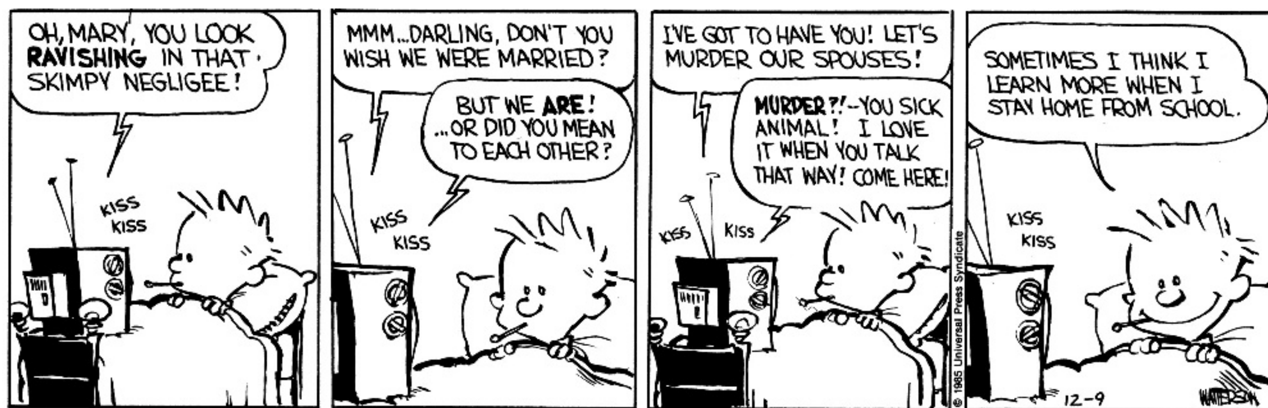
Sexual behavior, so defined, was first reported for the 1976, 1979, and 1980 seasons by Greenberg, Abelman, and Neuendorf. They found about two sexual activities per hour in their samples. What was then called petting, including long and passionate kisses, was most prominent, accounting for half of all incidents. The second most frequent activity was implied intercourse between individuals not married to each other. By the third study, implied intercourse was the most frequent activity.

Lowry and Towles (1989) compared the 1979 and 1987 seasons and found a radical change in the distribution of implied intercourse between married and unmarried partners. In the 1979 study, 31% of such acts were between married partners; that dropped to 3% in their follow-up study.

A 1985 study by Greenberg and D'Alessio analyzed 10 episodes of the three top-rated soaps. There were 3.7 coded sex incidents/references per hour, a sharp increase from the earlier study reports of 2 per hour. Intercourse (2.3 per hour) and long kisses (1 per hour) accounted for 9 of every 10 references. Intercourse was twice as likely among unmarried couples as among marriage partners, and one in five of the former was married to someone else. The coded sex acts were mostly verbal (70%), and all but a handful of the visual ones were long kisses.

By 1994, using the same coding scheme, sexual activity increased from 3.7 per hour to 5 per hour in the same three soaps and to 6.6 per hour across all five soaps analyzed in a study by Greenberg and Busselle. For the two soaps added to the sample because of their high ratings that season, the levels of sexual activity were extreme—11 per hour (*Days of our Lives*) and 7 per hour (*The Young and the Restless*). References to unmarried intercourse alone (2.4 per hour) now exceeded all sex acts found in the pre-1985 studies. In this study, rape acts were frequent, 1.4 per hour, based on then new concerns with date rape. In 50 episodes, there were five discussions of safe sex. A notable difference in the decade between the studies was the increase in visual depictions of sexual intercourse. In the 1985 study, there was one such visual incident; in the later study, one in four of all sex incidents visually simulated intercourse.

Heintz-Knowles (1996) studied the full set of nationally televised soaps. Her overall findings suggest more visual behaviors than earlier; most sexual activity among those with established relationships, rather than one-night stands; no increase in discussion



of safe sex; the omission of date-rape story lines; and sexual activity improving the participants' relationships with each other, at least temporarily.

Four studies by Kunkel and his colleagues (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005) examined soap sex in the broader context of all TV genres. In their first composite week (for the 1997–1998 season), 85% of their soap sample programs had some sexual content, a larger proportion than any other of the seven genres examined (movies were second at 83%). Of the soaps containing sexual elements, 11% also contained some risk/responsibility portrayal concurrently. If it was talk about sex, soaps averaged 4+ incidents per hour; only comedies had a higher average (5.9). If it was sexual behavior, soaps averaged 2.2 per hour, compared with 2.7 in comedies and 1.5 in dramas.

The 2001 study (of the 1999–2000 season) placed soaps third—behind movies and situation comedies—in the percentage of episodes that contained sexual content: 80% of all soaps had sex content compared with 89% of movies and 84% of sitcoms. Thus, soaps did not decrease nor did movies increase; sitcoms jumped dramatically. In contrast, only 7% of soaps contained any reference to sexual risks or responsibilities, compared to 13% of movies and 5% of sitcoms. Talking about sex remained similar with 4.1 incidents per hour, but soap opera discussions were now exceeded by sitcoms (7.3) and dramas (4.3). Sex behaviors for soaps were 2.4 per hour, still exceeded only by sitcoms (3.1).

Their analysis for the 2001–2002 season put soap operas soundly in first place in one category: 96% of its episodes had sexual content, compared with 87% in movies and 73% in sitcoms. Talking about sex was consistent with prior studies, at 4.1 incidents per hour, and sex behaviors continued to increase, now to 2.6 per hour. Sitcoms led in both sex talk (7.4) and sex behaviors (3.7).

Their 2005 report found that 70% of all shows have sexual content and that the number of scenes per program involving sex reached 5 per hour. Among soaps, 85% of its episodes had sexual content, whereas only 13% of those episodes contained portrayals of risk or responsibility.

—Bradley S. Greenberg and Tracy Worrell

See also Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Sex in Television, Incidence and Themes; Soap Operas, Content Analyses of

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SOCIAL CLASS

Although many studies have referred to social class as an important factor in media use, most include it merely as a background variable, with surprisingly few devoting much specific, detailed attention to it. Consequently, knowledge of this relationship, although extensive, is shallow with regard to the ways in which these variables actually interact.

SOCIAL CLASS AND SOCIAL STATUS

The first problem to be addressed is the definition of social class itself. In one of the few in-depth analyses of social class and media use among children and adolescents, Rosengren and Windahl (1989) noted that it is possible to trace operationalizations of the concept to the work of either Karl Marx or Max Weber. In the Marxist view, the economic structure of a society divides people into different classes, a class being composed of those occupying comparable places in the system of production. Weber also defined social classes in economic terms but based his definition on the means at a person's disposal to operate in any given market. To the notion of class, Weber added that of status, referring to the social prestige assigned to a person by others. Thus, in this tradition, the term *social* (or *socioeconomic*) status is more commonly used. However, social class and social status should not be regarded as mutually exclusive concepts. Whereas social *class* may be seen as defining the main socioeconomic framework within which mass media use takes place, social *status* prescribes more precise ways in which the media are used by different status groupings.

In mass communication research, there has been no uniformity in the use of these concepts. The Marxist variant is found mostly in European research, whereas the Weberian perspective, although also frequently employed in Europe, has left a deeper mark on American research. As a result of this lack of uniformity, various indicators of class or status have been employed, such as income, occupational status, and level of education.

In addition to Marx and Weber, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *cultural capital* has also been applied to the social foundations of media use. Cultural capital is defined as symbolic wealth socially regarded as worthy of being sought and possessed. According to this theory, the cultural capital children receive from home will affect their chances of success at school and thereby also the opportunities for later achieving status and a favorable position within the process of production. Cultural capital has also been found to be directly related to amounts and types of media use. A person's level of education has been found to be a good indicator of social status, thus conceived.

Rosengren and Windahl also stressed the need to differentiate between the concepts of *class of origin* and *class of destination* because the cogency of these contexts varies across the life span. Thus, whereas the social class of children is defined by that of their parents (class of origin), that of adults tends to be based on their own educational and occupational achievement (class of destination). For adolescents, the situation is more equivocal because they find themselves in a transitional context. As they grow older, the influence of their class of origin steadily diminishes; as they approach the end of their educational careers, they become increasingly aware of their probable destination in the status hierarchy, including whether or not their trajectory is socially mobile in an upward or downward direction. Via the process of *anticipatory socialization* (the process of adopting the values and orientations of a group to which one aspires but does not yet belong, with the aim of aiding one's transition into membership of that group), this perceived future can affect current behavior such as media uses and preferences. These indeterminate and transitory elements of adolescents' social class location may at least partially account for the weak correlations with adolescents' media use often reported in the literature.

RESEARCH EVIDENCE

Early studies of children's TV viewing did not find social class to be a significant factor. However, as the medium diffused more widely, evidence of social

class variations in TV use began to be consistently reported, primarily in Europe but also in the United States. Later studies refined the bivariate relationship, stressing the importance of such variables as age, gender, ethnicity, school achievement, and parents' media use as mediating factors. In particular, a strong interaction between social class and gender has been found, with the patterns of media use of middle-class girls very different and much more structured than those of working-class boys. Moreover, significant differences have been found in the degree of linearity in the relationship between children's media use and social origin, with the educational status of the mother proving to be a stronger and more linear predictor than the occupational status of the father. The concept of media use, too, needs to be differentiated because the existence and strength of relationships has been found to differ across various media, with some of the strongest and most consistent being found with respect to adolescents' music use.

Theoretical developments since the 1990s have to some extent diverted the focus of research away from generalizing concepts such as social class toward theories of individuation and personalized lifestyles. However, concepts such as lifestyle and social class may fruitfully be combined in models postulating that individual lifestyle choices are made within, and structured by, broader (changing) class contexts. Moreover, the case for ignoring class is rather weak, given the fact that studies in the United States and Europe continue to identify it as a significant factor. Deepening our understanding of the complexities of this relationship, however, will require more sophisticated, multivariate research designs because the research indicates that the effects of social class or status on children's and adolescent's media use may be mostly indirect.

—Keith Roe

See also Knowledge Gap; Literacy; Socialization and Media

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SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY/ SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

Social learning theory and social cognitive theory were developed by Albert Bandura in an effort to explain how individuals learn from the environment. Both theories provide a useful framework for understanding how the media influence behavior. This entry describes the main elements in social learning theory and social cognitive theory and their direct application to understanding the influence of the media on development.

Traditional learning theories suggest that people learn about societal expectations by performing behaviors and receiving direct positive or negative feedback from the environment. For example, learning theories suggest that girls and boys learn to play with different types of toys because they receive different feedback from parents, peers, and teachers when they play with the "right" toys (e.g., boys with trucks and girls with dolls) than when they play with the "wrong" toys (e.g., boys with dolls and girls with trucks.) From these sorts of experiences, individuals learn which behaviors work and which behaviors don't work in their environment.

The development of social learning theory marked a theoretical advance by suggesting that humans need not experience every cause and effect in order to learn; rather, they can learn by observing others. For example, children do not have to directly experience different feedback to learn about gender expectations; they can learn by observing the actions of others and the consequences they receive. Bandura termed this process *observational learning.*

Bandura further expanded his theory of learning in his description of social cognitive theory by focusing on the active role of human cognition in the process of

observational learning. Bandura suggests that people are not passive recipients of knowledge transmitted by their environments; rather, they actively seek out and process information. This means that every individual does not learn from every event in the environment; people, to some extent, choose what they see and to what they pay attention.

Social cognitive theory suggests that three interacting components determine which events result in observational learning: *personal characteristics,* such as attentional skills, interest, or prior beliefs; *behavioral actions*, including the choices people make to be in certain places or to look at certain things; and *environmental events*, or the things that happen to take place in the person's environment. Figure 1 depicts how these three factors interact to influence whether observational learning takes place.

Once these three components interact to produce an opportunity for observational learning, social cognitive theory suggests that four steps must take place for an observed event to influence an individual, or for learning to take place. These include (1) *observation,* or whether the person views an event, (2) *processing*, how the person understands the presented information, (3) *remembering,* whether the information is encoded in long-term memory, and (4) *internalizing*, whether the information is accepted by the individual such that it creates, or reinforces, a belief. Social cognitive theory suggests that all of these steps must be completed in order for an observed event to influence later behavior.

Bandura suggests that individuals engage in the process of observational learning with models presented through the media. For example, children can learn about gender-appropriate toys by watching a TV show in which a child is treated negatively for playing with a wrong toy. Furthermore, social cognitive theory suggests that humans have the capacity to generalize the patterns of actions and consequences that they observe in one situation to other similar situations. Therefore, in our example, children who view such an event on television easily apply what they see to other toys, games, and activities. Furthermore, the models in the media provide a source of information for *vicarious verification,* a process by which individuals check the accuracy of their own beliefs through comparison with others. For example, if adolescents think that certain behaviors might be OK but aren't quite sure, they can be encouraged to believe that the behaviors are OK by checking their thoughts against the thoughts expressed by models on television.

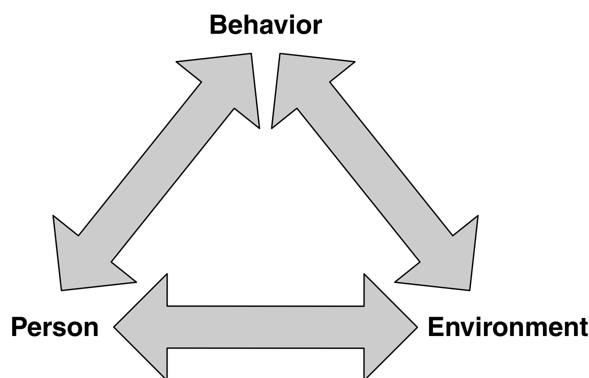

Figure 1 The Three Factors That Influence Observational Learning

According to social cognitive theory, information presented in the media will influence behavior only if an individual engages in all phases of observational learning. For example, consider a TV program in which a young boy bullies other children but does not get in trouble. A boy who engages in observational learning with this character as a model has the potential to learn that bullying behavior will not be punished. However, this learning could be interrupted at any stage. The boy may quickly change the channel because he is not interested (failure to *observe*). The boy may watch the program but not recognize the meaning (failure to *process*). He may understand the events taking place but be quickly distracted causing him to forget the plot (failure to *remember*). Finally, if the boy remembers the program but has a strong prior belief that bullies always get in trouble, he may reject the message of the scene (failure to *internalize*).

However, social cognitive theory also provides guidance for understanding how the media can manipulate messages to make successful observational learning more likely. In our example, the boy is more likely to learn the message that bullies do not get punished if such messages are contained in shows the child is interested in (making *observation* more likely); if the message is presented clearly (making *processing* more likely); and if the show focuses on the main theme, repeats the message many times, and is free of distracters (making *remembering* more likely). Finally, the media can influence whether an event is *internalized* by directly impacting beliefs. For example, if a child repeatedly views shows in which bullies do not get punished, and the shows contain varied plots and characters all with the same message, the child's initial

belief that bullies always get punished may come into question, making internalization more likely.

In summary, social cognitive theory suggests that the available models represented in the mass media provide many opportunities for observational learning through the demonstration of behavioral actions and consequences, as well as through the modeled expression of thoughts, emotions, and attitudes.

—Marjorie Rhodes, Daniel W. Brickman, and Brad J. Bushman

See also Media Effects; Schema Theory; Socialization and Media

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SOCIALIZATION AND MEDIA

Research on media socialization of children and youth is concerned with different ways that media play a part in the psychosocial development of the adolescent. Socialization is understood as an interaction between the individual and his or her environment. Children do not adapt themselves to their environment passively; rather, they actively construct an understanding of the world through interactions with their environment, and they actively shape their environment. Media are used to accomplish developmental tasks. In today's media society, the acquisition of media competence has become one of the important developmental tasks. Media socialization is influenced by parents, peers, the individual himself or herself, and the social environment, in a process that both opens up possibilities for and creates restrictions on the use of media and their contents.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Basic theories of media socialization are rooted in different disciplines, for example, developmental psychology, sociology of childhood, media research, and pedagogy. Developmental psychology shows that different developmental tasks have to be accomplished in certain stages due to biological, social, or individual necessities. Earlier theories considered the sequence of the developmental tasks to a greater extent as socially determined, such as the moment of the separation from parents or of the first intimate relationships. Today, it is rather emphasized that there are different processes that are equivalent in modern individualist societies. Media are used by children to accomplish such developmental tasks. They make use of media to become independent by developing their own media preferences, which may not coincide with those of their parents and may instead be anchored in their peer culture. Media contents are browsed for role models that contribute to the development, for example, representations of gender roles or of lifestyles.

Sociological theories emphasize the relationship between societal development and the changing role of the media. In the current media society, media permeate all life spheres of children from the earliest days on, continually changing families, schools, and other areas in which children grow up and are formatively influenced.

Media research examines the presence of media devices in places such as children's rooms, schools, and youth centers; how much time is spent with the media; what the goals of the media use are; and what effects emerge. It concludes that there are considerable differences by social class and gender in media access. Access gaps can deepen social differences further in the society, and they also influence the chances of development of the individual.

Finally, pedagogy is concerned with the relationship between parents, teachers, and others who influence the socialization of children by intentional media education. The main area is the development of media competence and the prevention of negative influences by media. More recent approaches emphasize also the possibilities of the media as resources for children.

CONTEXTS OF MEDIA SOCIALIZATION

In early childhood, the primary socialization takes place in the family. The media usage of children is influenced to a great extent by the mediation of the

parents as well as by parents' own media usage as role models. Studies show that children's rooms have been increasingly equipped with media over the past decades; as a result, children are developing a relative autonomy regarding the media in their everyday life. Television has become a medium used by families to form relationships among family members, for example, in the case of mother and daughter watching soap operas together and fathers and sons viewing sport programs; to give another example of family togetherness, siblings play a computer game together while parents discuss a newspaper article. Thus, media strengthen the substructures within the family and frequently contribute to the transmission of gender-specific media behavior and thereby to role-related behavior.

In school, media are used primarily as a learning aid. Reflection about media effects, however, rarely occurs in spite of several projects on media pedagogical concepts over the years. Media play an important role in the informal exchanges of peers during school and their leisure time. For example, the mobile telephone is used to communicate during school breaks, and a TV program or experiences with a new computer game are intensively discussed. Those who do not possess a computer or who are not allowed to watch television run the risk of being excluded by peers at school.

Media themselves and the world of consumption constitute an increasingly important agent of media socialization. The economy is addressing children and youth as customers more and more directly. Studies show that children spend a relatively high share of their pocket money on media, boys mainly on computer games and girls on mobile telephones. Through advertising on TV music channels, which are intensively used by youth, adolescent brand loyalty is fostered. Thus, media are of significance in the socialization of children as consumers.

RISKS OF MEDIA CONSUMPTION BY CHILDREN

Cultural commentators such as Neil Postman and Dave Grossman take pessimistic views, arguing that media are responsible for the disappearance of childhood. They postulate that media destroy the protected space of childhood by confronting children much too early with all aspects of the world, including consumption, violence, and constant entertainment. Children may encounter many topics for the first time in the media, which results in a distorted representation of reality. Several studies have demonstrated a relationship between the aggressiveness of children and their consumption of violence in media. Recent studies have examined adolescents' addiction to television and the Internet. On the Internet, game clans and communication forums such as chat rooms or newsgroups can lead to media addiction.

MEDIA AS RESOURCES FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Authors of the cultural studies approach emphasize that children use the media creatively to guide themselves, to develop their identity, and to test different identity representations. Transient but intensive devotion to horror films, computer games, or soap operas or to collecting objects like Pokemon is understood not as a risk, but rather as a resource that allows children to acquire their identity and position in the society as independent members. Not only reading, writing, and arithmetic, but also dealing with television and new media are cultural techniques. Children use them to compensate for deficits in other spheres. Thus, an intensive association with a media figure can compensate for family situations such as parental divorce or separation as well as for problems in relationships with teachers or peers.

CHANGES IN MEDIA SOCIALIZATION

Studies that examine historical changes in everyday media usage conclude that children become capable of using the media independently and are addressed directly as consumers at an ever earlier age. Furthermore, total time of media usage is increasing. At the same time, media are more frequently used not exclusively, but rather parallel to other activities. This is promoted by the mobility of the media and the multimedia capability of devices. Globalization leads to worldwide spread of children's and youth culture, for example, Harry Potter, Japanese manga, and anime such as *Dragenball.* Along with this, the marketing of new items moves more quickly and levels off sooner. Thus, society's general acceleration is reflected in an acceleration of the changing media habits of children and the youth. Although the children's commitment to fan cultures becomes more changeable, some basic

patterns remain: gender differences and differences of social backgrounds in early media socialization.

—Daniel Süss

See also Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Education, Family Involvement in; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Youth Culture

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SPONSORED EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL (SEM)

Hundreds of sponsored educational material (SEM) units are corporately produced and distributed annually to school classrooms. The topics span a broad range including SEMs on the environment, nutrition, health and safety, economics, history, money management, health insurance, and a variety of specific product units such as car-care products, specific energy producers, meat and livestock advocacy, and so on.

SEM comes in a variety of forms—poster kits, teaching packets of print materials, multimedia kits with videotapes, software, CD-ROMs, and print materials. Units vary in the range of materials provided. For example, three of the most extensive (Intel, Exxon Foundation, and the American Forest Foundation) contain 290 to more than 400-page teachers' guides as well as videos, CD-ROMs, student activities booklets, research assignments, data files, posters, and simulation games. Those treading the lighter side contain only a poster and a small teachers' guide. Consumers Union took on the daunting task of classifying this wide array of materials and evaluating those that contained an accompanying teaching guide (thereby classifying their materials as instructional curricula). This entry examines the general nature and approach of SEM within each of the major topical categories, the degree to which SEM units are balanced or biased and incomplete, and the overall implications of these findings for school curricular materials.

GENERAL NATURE AND APPROACH OF SEM

Environment

Companies providing environmental units range quite broadly, from entities such as the American Coal Foundation and the American Forest Foundation to Exxon, McDonald's, Procter & Gamble, Dow Chemical, Chlorine Institute, Steel Can Recycling Institute, and the Council for Wildlife Conservation & Education, Inc. Examples from the nature and flavor of respective presentations follow.

American Coal Foundation. Its materials have the goal of helping seventh-to-ninth-grade classes "learn more about America's most abundant energy source—coal." The unit indicates that coal is abundant, inexpensive, and poses very few environmental problems. CO_2 emissions and global warming are presented as a potential Earth benefit.

American Forest Foundation. This program for grades K–8 seeks to help children think seriously about complex environmental issues, both local and global. It supports the concept of managed forestry while indicating that trees, forests, forest products, and responsible conservation or land-use are vitally important.

Exxon Education Foundation. The extensive set of resources is designed for middle school and high school. Materials seek to help students understand the scientific principles supporting world energy choices and the social implications accompanying those choices.

McDonald's. Targeting 7-to-12-year-olds, McDonald's enlisted the Field Museum of Natural History to help create student understanding of environmental issues and encourage them to become active participants, both currently and in the future.

Procter & Gamble. Billed as "Planet Patrol" for fourth to sixth graders, the unit prompts students to consider environmental impact in their product use and product decisions. The curriculum teaches that the company is

environmentally responsible and that disposable diapers are positive for the environment because they can be composted.

Dow Chemical. Developed by the American Chemical Society, this unit targets high school chemistry classes with the goal of increasing scientific literacy by demonstrating chemistry's societal impact. It contains the basic message that everything around us is composed of chemicals and students should understand how chemicals work and how they impact students' lives and society in general.

Chlorine Institute. This unit for middle school children sets out to develop student interest in this chemical element and parlay it into an interest in element-based building-block chemistry.

Steel Can Recycling Institute. For grades 5 to 8, this unit sensitizes students to the importance of recycling all renewable materials and the special value in using and conserving steel, which is characterized as one of the most environmentally friendly materials.

Council for Wildlife Conservation & Education, Inc. Designed for middle and high school, the council's unit outlines its success in bringing back endangered species from the brink of extinction and implementing measures to assure their health and long-term viability.

Nutrition

The following three examples provide a cross-sectional view of SEMs—Dole Food Company, Kellogg's, and Mars, Inc.

Dole Food Company. Designed in partnership with the Society for Nutrition Education, this "5 a Day Adventures" curriculum teaches middle schoolers the benefits of eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

Kellogg's. Partnering with the American Health Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, the company developed two units for elementary school children ("Eat to the Beat" on choosing healthful foods and "Kids get going with breakfast" with tips on good breakfast-eating habits). A third unit for middle and high school students provides information about using the food pyramid to build a healthful diet.

Mars. With World Cup Soccer and Scholastic, Inc., this elementary school unit aims to connect food and fitness with "100% Smart Energy to Go." Mars bars are characterized as such energy.

Health and Safety

State Farm. The insurance company produced three units—two for elementary school children and one for grades K–12. The topics range from "Inside/Out" (what influences our health) to "Smoke Detectives" (fire prevention and safety) to "Movers and Shakers" (earthquake information and preparedness). All units have extensive support materials.

Upjohn Corporation. Their "Secret of Life" unit for middle school children introduces them to concepts of genetics. It was designed to coordinate with a *Science and Children* PBS series.

National Energy Foundation. Entitled "Safety Watcher," this unit educates elementary school children on electrical safety.

Economics, History, and Money Management

Visa. Its high school student orientation is designed to help build strong financial and consumer skills.

California Beef Council. For grades 6–8, this unit explores the image and legend of the American cowboy.

CONTENT BALANCE OR BIAS/INCOMPLETENESS

Like the range of topics, the SEM units sprawl quite widely across the balance or bias spectrum. Within the conservation units cited, five of the nine (55.5%) were found to be strongly biased, whereas two (22.2%) were moderately biased and two were balanced. The highly exemplary units were Dow Chemical and the American Forestry Foundation, both notably objective and noncommercial.

Among the nutritional units cited, Dole proved exemplary, whereas the others (80%) were considered highly biased. And in the economics, history, and money management area, both units cited were evaluated as moderately biased. Overall, 80% of all units evaluated contained bias or incomplete information,

and more than 50% were deemed either commercial or highly commercial. This scorecard suggests that the stellar examples cited are a precious few and that among the many SEMs, product promotion and bias are far more the rule.

—Edward L. Palmer

See also Advertising, Health and; Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Commercial Television and Radio in Schools; Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Schools, Advertising/Marketing in

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SPORTS TELEVISION

Sporting events represent an important source of programming for the television industry. Countless live sporting events and spin-off programs (e.g., talk shows, preview and postgame shows, sports news, and highlight shows) are aired each day. Specialized sports networks available on cable abound and include golf, football, outdoor sports, college sports, soccer, and racing of all varieties, to name but a few. In addition, premium channels in most markets allow viewers—for an extra charge—to see all of the games played in major league baseball, and the National Basketball Association (NBA), Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), National Football League (NFL), National Hockey League (NHL), and the Premiere league. Finally, pay-per-view television allows viewers to watch WWE wrestling and nearly all title fights in the world of boxing.

One way to estimate the importance of sports programming to the television industry is to examine the amount of money networks spend to buy the rights to these events. Table 1 provides the costs of most of the rights for most major sporting events during the 2002–2003 season—more than $5 billion were spent for the television rights for 1 year, and that excludes the cost of the WNBA, boxing, wrestling, and a host of other sports such as college football. NBC paid $793 million for the rights to the 2004 Summer Olympics held in Athens, Greece, and NBC will pay $894 million for the rights to the 2008 Summer Games in Beijing. According to *USA Today,* NBC, MSNBC, and the other NBC networks aired more than 800 hours of Olympic programming during the 2004 games. These games garnered an audience of more than 200 million viewers and set a ratings record as the most-watched non-U.S. Summer Olympics in history.

Further evidence of the importance of sports programming to the television industry can be found in the Nielsen ratings. During the 2003–2004 television season, the three most widely viewed TV specials focused on the Super Bowl. In fact, according to the Nielsen ratings, sports programs held 4 of the top 5 slots and 6 of the top 10 television specials for the year.

These high levels of viewership for the 2003–2004 television season are not an anomaly. Nielsen's list of the highest rated programs of all time is filled with sports programming. In fact, 55% of the 40 most widely viewed programs of all time were sports programs. This list includes NFL games and women's Olympic figure skating, with World Series baseball games and NBA games not too much further down the list.

Most televised sporting events do not attract ratings audiences as large as the most popular prime-time network programs. Researchers recognize that the Nielsen ratings consistently underestimate the audience of sporting events because of measurement error. This error in audience estimation stems from the fact that Nielsen system has not traditionally taken into consideration the fact that many TV viewers watch sporting events with friends and in public places. Thus, anyone not watching TV at home is lost in the ratings assessment process.

While estimates vary, somewhere between 10% and 20% of all TV viewing is done outside the home. In the Nielsen system, which employs 8,000 families to represent the U.S. viewing audience, that percentage could mean a huge swing in the ratings, an increase of as much as 12 rating points. In fact, Nielsen and other rating companies have begun to employ portable people meters to combat this problem. These devices work like a cell phone and transmit audio sounds back to Nielsen so they can keep track of all media usage home or away, without reliance on the memory of the Nielsen family member. Although sports programming might not attract an audience as large as prime-time network programs, the ratings for sporting events are consistently

Table 1 Approximate TV Rights Expenditures for 2002–2003

Sport	*Network(s)*	*Cost/Millions*
National Football League games	ESPN	$600
	ABC	$550
	Fox	$550
	CBS	$500
Major league baseball	Fox	$417
	ESPN	$141
Winter Olympics	NBC	$555
NCAA basketball games	CBS	$565
National Basketball Association games	NBC	$350
	TNT/TBS	$178
NASCAR	Fox	$200
NASCAR	NBC/TBS	$200
Professional Golf Association	ABC/CBS/NBC	$162
National Hockey League games	ESPN/ABC	$120
IRL/Indy 500	ABC	$28
U.S. Open tennis	CBS	$38
Wimbledon tennis	NBC	$22
	TBS	$8
Figure skating	ABC	$12
Triple crown horse racing	NBC	$10
Total Television Rights for 2002 = $5.2 Billion		

SOURCE: TN media analysis of Nielsen data, cited in Downey, K. (2001). "Sports TV get pricier and pricier. Here's why." Retrieved June 31, 2005, from http://www.medialifemagazine.com/news2001/apr01/apr09/4_thurs/news1thursday.html

as high as programs on cable. With the employment of portable people meters, advertisers may find sports programming is more competitive than previously known.

Given the proliferation of sports programming available, the question becomes, How much time do people spend watching sports on TV? According to Robinson and Godbey's (1997) study of leisure time in the United States, 37.8% of Americans' leisure time is spent watching television. Adults watch television an average of 87.6 minutes per day, which is more than any other activity, save their main job and sleeping. Roberts and Foehr found that the average 8-to-18-year-old, however, watches more than 3 hours per day.

A *Sports Illustrated* poll reported that 84% of Americans watch sports on television at least once a week, and 71% of those polled considered themselves fans. A 2001 nationwide study, commissioned jointly by the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles and ESPN, reports that 93% of all children in the United States, ages 8 to 17, report using some form of sports media. Seven in 10 children interact with sports through the media a couple of times a week or every day, and 88% of those use television for their sports information, preferring it over radio, print, and the Internet. Although children said "big three" professional sports—NBA, NFL, and major league baseball—were the sports they interact with most through the media, the Olympic Games are watched by more children (84%) than any other type of sports television programming, according to figures from Statistical Research, Inc. (2001). These numbers come even at a time when broadcast TV audiences are on the decline, and there are more choices than ever on cable.

Social critics have argued that television is changing the nature of our culture. Given that an estimated $6 billion is wagered legally and illegally on the Super Bowl and 6% of the nation's workforce calls in sick on the following Monday, it is easy to make an argument that sports may, at times, be detrimental to society. Some critical scholars and social theorists have argued that sports proficiency is less a way out of poverty than it is a way to maintain the status quo. These critics suggest televised sporting events are used by the power elite as a vehicle for inculcating sexist, racist, nationalistic, and violent ideas in viewers; they are not simply entertainment for the masses.

Although sports and TV are inextricably intertwined, many sports purists and social critics have argued the relationship has had detrimental effects on the sports, extending the length of games to incorporate advertisements, artificially breaking the flow of games, and even changing the techniques employed by athletes during the games—so they are more likely to end up in the nightly highlight shows. Further examples of these changes abound: Instant replay, the shootout in hockey, the television timeout in football and basketball, the revised championship point system in NASCAR, modification of league configurations, and the creation of playoff systems all appear to be

changes made to accommodate television and advertisers. This is to say nothing about the changes that have occurred in the notion of student athletes competing in intercollegiate activities.

Because so much time is spent viewing sports television, it is incumbent on future scholars to examine the impact of coviewing of sports on family interaction. According to Statistical Research (2001), 70% of children between the ages of 8 and 17 usually watch sports television with others. About 55% report watching with their fathers, 23% with their mothers, and 14% with both their parents. These coviewing opportunities need to be examined carefully by mass communication scholars because they provide parents excellent opportunities for discussing moral issues found in competition; the games also provide an excellent vehicle for promoting media literacy.

There are many reasons why sports programming is so popular with television audiences. Sporting events are an excellent source of drama. The contests are typically zero-sum games with unpredictable outcomes. The rules provide predictable structures and rituals that give viewers a sense of familiarity and understanding of the event. However, forces outside the control of participants (e.g., weather, luck, injuries, and officiating) can directly or indirectly affect the outcome. The games contain villains and heroes, like all good drama. Finally, they provide audience members the feelings of involvement, identification, and participation in the activity that are missing from most other forms of television content. Sports programs, unlike many other genres of programming, are designed to feel like a live event in which viewers can immerse themselves as if they were in the stadium or arena. The advent of new technologies such as high-definition television and interactive television will only enhance the live experience.

—James D. Robinson and Kymberly Higgs

See also Coviewing; World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE)

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STICKY MARKETING

Sticky marketing refers to employing tactics that make people willingly expose themselves to a promotional message again and again. Specifically, the term is usually used to refer to web pages; a sticky web page is one that people choose to return to repeatedly, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will learn, be persuaded, and perhaps even purchase something. Sticky marketing enables targeting, personalization, and

interaction with surfers, who may then become patrons. Children may be quite receptive to sticky marketing techniques, which has led policymakers to implement restrictions relating to websites targeted at children.

There are numerous ways to make a site sticky; the most effective ones do so in a way that is integrated with the company's brand image and other promotional messages. For example, a website may offer visitors the opportunity to email a web page to a friend, thereby creating the potential to increase the site's reach. It can provide customized content in the form of a horoscope, local weather, or updated headlines. It can provide free email or downloadable programs, such as screensavers or wallpaper. It can create a forum where people may chat or post messages; again, not only does this increase the likelihood of repeat visits from the original user, it also increases the likelihood that new users will discover the site. Anything that brings a visitor back to a web page is a form of sticky marketing: It makes visitors "stick" to the page. In this sense, the brand associated with the site gains credibility and longevity.

Research shows that young children are unable to understand the consequences of revealing their personal information and that vast amounts of such information from children have been collected by marketers. Concern over this led the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in 1998 to present Congress with a report on the subject that ultimately led to the passage of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which took effect in April 2000.

The act requires commercial websites directed at children to obtain parental consent for collection of personal data from any child under the age of 13 and prohibits disclosure of that information to other commercial entities. It also stipulates that there can be limited collection of personal data during participation in online contests and games, as well as from home pages, pen pal services, email services, message boards, and chat rooms. These are all sticky marketing tactics.

—Lara Zwarun

See also Branding; Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Internet Bulletin Boards

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SUBSTANCE USE

See Drug Use, Depictions of

SUPER-PEER THEORY

There are a number of theories regarding exactly *how* the media have an impact on children and teenagers. One of the more cogent and recent ones is the super-peer theory, which applies particularly to adolescents. Although the influence of *peers* on adolescents has been accepted for many decades, the influence of the *media* on adolescents remains controversial. Many studies have documented the importance of peers in determining the initiation of such behaviors as cigarette smoking, drug use, and sexual intercourse. But one question has traditionally remained unanswered: Where do the peers get their notions that smoking cigarettes or drinking beer or having sex will make them "cool"? The super-peer theory hypothesizes that the media can exert influence in the same way as teens' peers do, but in an even more powerful way, hence the "super" peer.

When sex, drug use, and violence are so prevalent on the TV and movie screens, it makes teenagers think that everyone but them is having sex, drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, or getting into fights. Teenage sitcoms routinely show young people obsessed with sex. Movies are more explicit in showing not only sexual activity but teens drinking, smoking, and even committing violence. So, for example, one survey of teenagers found that they felt that TV encouraged them to have sex. Other studies have found that teenagers routinely overestimate the number of their peers who are having sex, probably, in part, because of media influence. In another study, pregnant teens were twice as likely as nonpregnant teens to think that TV relationships are real and that TV characters would not use birth control.

When considering high-risk adolescent behavior (sex, drugs, violence, suicide), the concept of *normative behavior* is extremely important. Teens want to blend in with each other, and so they seek to do whatever is considered the norm. If they think that all of their friends are sexually active, or smoking marijuana, or drinking alcohol, they are more likely to try it themselves. The media present teens with innumerable "friends" and attractive adult role models who are engaging in high-risk behaviors. For example, the average teen views nearly 15,000 sexual references on TV each year, yet less than 170 deal with responsible sexuality. The increasing number of ads for Viagra, Cialis, and Levitra makes it seem that adults are thinking about sex all of the time, so why shouldn't teenagers? The 2,000 beer and wine ads that the average teen sees annually make drinking alcohol appear normal and macho. And, of course, the prevalence and acceptability of media violence make aggressive behavior seem like a common solution to everyday problems. As a result, teens are led into thinking the media world is the "real world," and they should behave accordingly.

—Victor C. Strasburger

See also Media Effects

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SURGEON GENERAL'S SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TELEVISION AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

With a $1 million budget, the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior was born in 1969 and operated out of the National Institute of Mental Health. Consisting of 12 social scientists appointed by then-Surgeon General William Stewart, the committee was charged with determining the impact of television violence on young people. Completed in January 1972, the committee's five-volume technical report consists of 40 scientific papers and fills more than 2,300 pages.

Media content and control. Volume 1 examines television content, content creation, and media usage patterns. Most of this volume's reports scrutinize and discuss how television violence portrayals have changed over time; the volume also contrasts portrayals in the United States with television programming in Great Britain, Sweden, and Israel. Between 1967 and 1969, 8 of 10 prime-time entertainment programs contained violence, at a rate of about 8 incidents per hour. Nearly 96% of the cartoons contained violence, and the rate of those violent acts was much higher than the rate observed in prime-time programming.

Television and social learning. Volume 2 focuses on how preadolescent children learn from television; it was based on Albert Bandura's (1965) work on observational learning. The findings support the notion that children can and do learn aggressive behavior from television. Whether these findings can be generalized beyond the laboratory was beyond the scope of the investigations, and that was the primary criticism levied by the industry against these highly regarded studies.

Television and adolescent aggressiveness. Volume 3 answers questions about the aggressive behavior of adolescents and their media usage. Positive and significant correlations between preference for violent programming and aggressive behavior, as well as time spent viewing violent programming and aggressive behavior, were observed. Although the correlations were low to moderate—accounting for only about 10% of the variance—the relationships remained even after controlling for factors such as socioeconomic status and performance at school. Although TV violence alone cannot account for aggressive behavior in adolescents, the notion that adolescent aggressiveness and viewing TV violence are related was supported.

Television in day-to-day life. Volume 4 focuses on family viewing patterns, program preferences, and the amount of time audiences spent with television during the 1970s. This volume also examines the uses people

have for television as well as a variety of demographic variables including age, socioeconomic status, and race. Comparisons of the time spent with TV and other leisure on a daily basis, as well as audience attitudes toward programming and commercials, were also included in this volume.

Television effects: Further explorations. Perhaps the most discussed portion of this section of the report is the discussion of Feshbach and Singer's (1971) work on TV violence and catharsis. Although this theory is not widely believed today, catharsis suggests that audience members can vent their aggressive feelings through the release they experience while watching violence on television. This is a classic example of the value of critique and the public nature of scholarship.

A sixth volume titled "Summary and Conclusions" was also produced by the advisory committee. Unfortunately, the conclusions reported in the summary were not based on the technical report, and some of the researchers complained their results were not presented fairly or accurately. These alleged misrepresentations were problematic because the summary was available before the technical report and because several eminent scholars, including Albert Bandura and Leonard Berkowitz, had been excluded from the advisory committee.

The technical report concludes that children's programming is more violent than prime-time programming and that children spend a great deal of time watching television. The research examined the impact of variables that might affect the relationship between exposure to violence and aggressiveness; in most cases, these variables did not eliminate the small to moderate relationship observed between violent programming and aggressive actions. Finally, the preponderance of evidence presented supports the position that viewing violence increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior. Children can and do imitate the aggressive behavior viewed on TV and can become disinhibited or desensitized to violence.

—James D. Robinson, Kimberly Bell, and Jeanine W. Turner

See also Aggression, Television and; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Media Effects; Television, Child Variables and Use of; Television, Motivations for Viewing of; Television, Viewer Age and; Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to

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TALK SHOWS, CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

As young people construct their identity, they are faced with specific developmental tasks that require a high degree of competence in daily life. In this process of development, they draw on resources in their media environment. In constructing their self-concept, young people take into account reality as they perceive it. Media such as talk shows provide important symbolic material that young people can use in the process of developing a personal and social identity.

Numerous convincing studies suggest that although the talk show is not the favorite genre of adolescents (those older than age 12), it nevertheless is of some importance in shaping their view of reality. For example, Davis and Mares (1998) investigated the influence of viewing talk shows on adolescents' perception of social reality through a survey of 282 U.S. high school pupils between the ages of 13 and 18 years. The questionnaire included the subjects' self-assessment concerning the frequency of certain behavior patterns shown in talk shows and individual judgments on certain social behavior patterns. Issues raised included running away from home, illegal weapons in schools, teenage pregnancy, adolescent sex, and adultery. Participants who said they viewed many talk shows often overestimated the frequency of deviant behaviors (regularly shown on the talk shows) in daily life, as researchers had predicted. However, two further hypotheses could not be verified. Frequent viewers of talk shows were no more likely than infrequent viewers to trivialize social issues related to these behaviors, and frequent viewers did not appear indifferent or insensitive to people experiencing problems in these areas.

This kind of empirical evidence is supported by studies conducted in Germany. In 1997, Bente and Fromm found programs that involve emotional TV viewing—the genre to which daily talk shows belong—share characteristics such as personification, authenticity of the show, intimacy, and emotionalization. These aspects are crucial in the development of a young person's identity. The question that arises, therefore, is how influential these shows are. In a large-scale study conducted in Germany, Paus-Haase et al. (1999) examined the extent to which watching daily talk shows affected the perception of reality and the understanding of what it means to be a person among adolescents (between 12 and 17) who are more frequent viewers. This study was designed as a multistage inquiry including (a) a product- and perception-related quantitative analysis consisting of representative interviews with 657 adolescents concerning their viewing of talk shows, their reasons for watching them, and their perception of the topics and presenters as well as various aspects of how they perceive reality; and (b) qualitative analyses that involved group discussion with a total of 120 subjects and individual interviews with 53 participants who declared themselves either fans of a talk show or occasional viewers.

Although daily talk shows do not explicitly address adolescents, numerous young viewers show considerable interest in them, this study found. In part, this is because of their special design, which uses various modes of production to convey authenticity, tackle serious everyday life issues, and portray intense

arguments. Some of these shows reached regular shares of up to 30% in the market segment of 12-to-17-year-old viewers. Young people choose what talk shows to watch on the basis of the issues that interest them. Surprisingly, topics that are considered to raise the ratings of shows, such as sex or crime, prove to be less popular among adolescents. They seem to be most interested in topics that are discussed relatively seldom, such as music and what it is like to be a young person. Topics dealing with body care, beauty, and fashion are significantly more popular with girls than boys. Girls seem to display a stronger interest in most other categories as well, with the exceptions of society or politics and male topics such as professional sports. The ways in which young people approach these issues differ greatly depending on gender, education, and several other factors, such as family structure and the number and quality of peer group relations. These various approaches are dependent on two major functions a talk show may have for young people: providing guidelines for everyday life management, and providing entertainment and amusement. However, some adolescents disapprove of talk shows in general, and 25% of young people between 12 and 17 say that they do not watch talk shows at all.

Based on the empirical findings of the qualitative studies described above, central interpretative dimensions can be identified, involving four basic patterns of reception. Each of these patterns is located on a continuum between two contradictory poles and is expressed in different degrees: naïve versus reflected reception, involved versus distanced reception, search for entertainment versus search for orientation, and positive assessment versus negative assessment of the shows.

Against the background of these four dimensions, six reception patterns were found. The first pattern can be described as *oppositional reading* and refers to an attempt to satisfy a desire for entertainment; this pattern is exclusively encountered in young men with more formal education and exceptional talents, who behave in a relatively grown-up manner and refuse a naïve or involved reception based on their ability to reflect and their strong concept of masculinity.

The second pattern is a critical and competent *search for orientation and self-awareness*; this pattern is found with boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 15 years who attend secondary school (gymnasium in Germany) and show a high degree of competence in dealing with media. Based on their age, they demand an orientation for upcoming developmental tasks. They are, however, able to distance themselves from reality constructions in talk shows; this occurs due to their reflexive reception (ability to distance themselves) even though they are involved in the program. In addition, they appear to be firmly rooted in their families, peer groups, and school and personal friendships.

The third reception pattern is again a *search for orientation and self-awareness,* this time, however, in the form of naïve reception by girls faced with a variety of problems. This form of reception refers only to girls between the ages of 15 and 17 who are faced with problems in the family and watch talks shows rather naïvely. The educational background of these respondents is not meeting their challenges. Most of these girls had been socialized in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) and had problems coming to terms with the structural changes that have taken place in the decade after German unification. They tend to live in problematic family circumstances, and their options as to what to do with their leisure time are severely limited. The uncertainty that characterizes their lives places additional pressure on girls during prepuberty and puberty, a time when they strive to build their self-confidence and play an active role in family discussions as well as in school and in peer groups. Against this background, girls use talk shows as advisers in concrete problem situations—usually in connection with their family—and as orientation aids in difficult personal situations (drugs, criminality, sexuality, first love, beauty, and body image).

The fourth pattern is the *naïve-idealizing reception* by younger girls who are faced with problems. Daily talk shows function as an alternative concept to their daily environment, as a fairy tale in a complex reality. These girls watch the shows in an exceptionally naïve and idealizing manner; of those young people presented in this study, they appear to be most likely to be influenced by talk show contents. Their constructions of reality as well as their values are strongly influenced by the topics, guests, and presenters of daily talks. The girls with this reception pattern were, with one exception, 12 years old and residents of the former GDR; thus, they are faced with problems similar to those described in the third pattern, particularly with regard to their families. Furthermore, due to their young age, they encounter daily talk shows with additional naiveté, and they are faced with developmental tasks of early puberty in which they need the loving support of their parents. They view talk show presenters as saviors or knights in shining armor.

The fifth pattern refers to recipients who drift between the two opposite ways of approaching daily talk shows—amusement and orientation. Young people in this category are characterized by a high ambivalence in dealing with such programs; they are young men (15 to 17 years of age) who drift between a naïve and reflected as well as between an involved and distanced reception. On the one hand, as is typical for their gender, they want to amuse themselves with daily talk shows. On the other hand, however, they look for orientation in a focused manner. These boys are lacking stability and orientation in the most important developmental phase, puberty. Their fluctuating pattern of reception reflects internal tensions in connection with their environmental conditions.

The sixth and final pattern, displayed by boys and girls of different ages, involves an alternation between the poles of involvement and distanced reception, between male and female ways of dealing with daily talk shows. These youngsters also oscillate between a rather masculine and feminine self-representation in their actions and attitudes. Boys, in particular, encounter a lack of understanding in their peer groups; in those groups, they have to be cool, and it is considered unmanly to watch daily talk shows for orientation. Based on their ambivalent self-constructions of gender, these young people look for examples and topics in daily talk shows that enable them to perceive themselves as rather masculine at one time and rather feminine at another.

Theunert and Schorb (2000) investigated daily talk shows within the context of demographically relevant information in Germany. According to this survey, 18% of 210 subjects between 12 and 17 years old reported that they get information from talk shows. Another survey method—a dialogue based on these results—involved 10 adolescents who discussed these issues in a 2-day seminar with representatives from politics and television people from the field of information programming. According to main findings of this survey, young females seem to believe that talk shows give them important information. One out of three girls thinks that the information she gets from talk shows is relevant to daily life and helps her deal with problems. In comparison to adolescents from Western Germany, adolescents from former Eastern Germany are represented significantly more, with 38%.

—*Ingrid Paus-Hasebrink*

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Developmental Differences, Media and; Family Environment, Media Effects on; Gender Identity Development; Research Methods, Questionnaires and Surveys

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TEENAGER, HISTORY OF

Used to denote young people between 13 and 19 years old, the concept of "the teenager" developed in the United States during the 1940s. Since the 1600s, it had been common to refer to youths as being in their "teens," but it was only during the mid-20th century that the term *teenager* entered the popular vocabulary. The American advertising and marketing industries were crucial in popularizing the concept. U.S. marketers used the *teenager* to denote what they saw as a new market of young, affluent, and leisure-oriented consumers, a market created by the economic boom that followed World War II.

THE RISE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S SPENDING POWER

A distinctive commercial youth market first emerged during the 19th century. During the Victorian era, a

gradual increase in young workers' leisure time and disposable income laid the basis for an embryonic youth market, with cities in America and Europe seeing the development of mass-produced goods, entertainments, and fashions targeted at the young.

The youth market expanded further during the 1920s and 1930s. In Britain, despite a general economic downturn, young workers' disposable income gradually rose, and they were courted by a growing range of commercial interests, including dance halls and magazine publishers. In the United States, the economic boom of the 1920s also ensured a budding youth market. The expansion of American colleges and universities allowed for the development of a recognizable campus culture among young, relatively well-to-do students who represented an attractive market for a variety of entertainment and consumer industries, including dance halls, clothing stores, cinemas, and cafeterias.

The American youth market was hard-hit by the economic depression of the 1930s. During the 1940s, however, young people's incomes were revitalized by the labor demands of the wartime economy. According to some estimates, American youth accounted for a collective spending power of about $750 million per year by 1944. This level of disposable income helped crystallize notions of teenagers as a uniquely autonomous social group and also provided the basis for a further expansion of the commercial youth industries and their associated media.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEENAGE MARKET

During the 1950s, the scope and scale of the U.S. youth market underwent significant growth. This was partly a result of demographic trends. A wartime increase in births and a postwar baby boom saw the American teen population grow from 10 to 15 million during the 1950s, eventually hitting a peak of 20 million by 1970. A postwar expansion of education, meanwhile, further accentuated notions of youth as a distinct social group, with the proportion of U.S. teenagers attending high school rising from 60% in the 1930s to virtually 100% during the 1960s. The vital stimulus behind the growth of the teenage market, however, was economic. Peacetime saw a decline in full-time youth employment, but a rise in youth spending was sustained by a combination of part-time work and parental allowances, with some estimates suggesting that teenage Americans' average weekly income rose from just over $2 in 1944 to around $10 by 1958.

A huge range of media and products were geared to the 1950s teenager, with consumer industries interacting with and reinforcing one another as they courted young consumers. Exemplifying the growth of the teen market was the rise of rock and roll, a genre of popular music tied much more closely than its predecessors to processes of mass marketing, media dissemination, and youth demand. The success of *Seventeen* magazine also testified to the growth of the American teen market. Conceived as a magazine for college girls, *Seventeen* was launched in 1944, and by 1949, its monthly circulation had soared to 2.5 million. Marketers such as Eugene Gilbert also helped promote the commercial potential of young people's spending power. Gilbert launched his career as a specialist in youth marketing in 1945, and by 1947, his market research firm, Youth Marketing Co., was flourishing. Gilbert was acknowledged as an authority on the teenage market, and during the 1950s, his book, *Advertising and Marketing to Young People* (1957), became a manual for teen merchandising.

THE DISSEMINATION OF TEENAGE LIFESTYLES

The growth of the mass media was a crucial factor in the dissemination of the concept of the teenager. The proliferation of teen magazines, films, and TV shows such as *American Bandstand* (syndicated on the ABC network from 1957) ensured that teen-oriented styles and music spread quickly throughout the United States. The global circulation of U.S. media also allowed the fashions and entertainment of teenage America to spread worldwide.

As in the United States, demographic shifts underpinned the growth of the European teen market. In Britain, for example, a postwar baby boom saw the number of people under 20 years old grow from 3 million in 1951 to more than 4 million by 1966. As in America, economic trends were also important. In Britain, for instance, buoyant levels of youth employment enhanced youth's disposable income and ensured a ready market for teen-oriented films, music, and fashions. European youth styles also fed back into the development of American teenage culture. During the mid-1960s, for example, the United States was captivated by a British pop music "invasion" spearheaded by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.

THE TEENAGER IN THE 21st CENTURY

During the 1980s and 1990s a rise in youth unemployment, coupled with the declining size of the Western youth population, threatened to reduce levels of teen spending. By the beginning of the 21st century, however, demographic shifts and economic trends indicated that youth would continue to be a lucrative commercial market. Despite a long-term decline in Western birthrates, the youth population was set to increase during the new millennium as the echo of the baby boom worked its way through the demographic profiles of America and Europe. On both sides of the Atlantic, moreover, market research indicated that teenagers' spending power was still growing.

Teenage tastes also increasingly appealed to other age groups. For example, manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers increasingly targeted teenage fashions at preteens (especially girls), who were encouraged to buy products ostensibly geared to older consumers. Teenage lifestyles also crept up the age scale. By the end of the 1990s, many consumers in their 20s and even 40s or older were favoring tastes and lifestyles associated with youth culture. The teenage market, therefore, was no longer the preserve of adolescents but had won a much broader cultural appeal.

—Bill Osgerby

See also Adolescents, Media Portrayals of; Advertising, Market Size and; Advertising, Materialism and; Branding; Childhood, Media Portrayals of; Consumerism; Globalization, Media and; Magazines, Adolescent Boys'; Magazines, Adolescent Girls'; Youth Culture

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was widely hailed as the most comprehensive piece of telecommunications legislation in 60 years. The law was the most comprehensive and substantial piece of legislation involving the communications industry since the Communications Act of 1934, which created the Federal Communications Commission. Recognizing the quickly changing nature of communications technology and the vast potential of digital technologies, Congress sought to restructure much of the law governing the telecommunications industry. The act affected the telecommunications industry along a number of fronts, including content, competition, and ownership. Although the law had an immediate effect on the industry, most notably in terms of radio station ownership, parts of the act have yet to come to full fruition.

INDUSTRY DEREGULATION

One stated purpose of the act was to reduce or remove barriers among the various parts of the telecommunications industry to increase competition in the marketplace, ultimately for the benefit of the consumer. For example, the act attempted to increase competition in the delivery of cable television content by repealing legislation preventing telephone operators from delivering video content into customer homes. Likewise, the act also repealed legislation preventing cable operators from delivering phone service into homes. Nonetheless, critics have proclaimed that despite these opportunities, industry economics and infrastructure continue to prohibit direct head-to-head competition in most local markets.

The most immediate effects of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 were felt in the area of station ownership, as the act relaxed long-established ownership

caps, both for television and radio stations. With respect to television, the act allowed individual groups to own stations reaching up to 35% of the U.S. population, up from 25%. Moreover, the law also eliminated a 12-station cap on the number of television stations one group could own. The act also eliminated national radio station ownership caps and relaxed local radio ownership caps. This deregulation led to a wave of acquisitions and mergers within the broadcast industry, as group owners quickly began to purchase stations across the country. Critics argue that the effects of this corporate consolidation are a lack of diversity on the airwaves and the loss of local input regarding station programming. Despite the act's favorable attitude toward deregulation, the FCC has continued to closely examine broadcasters' efforts to provide programming for children. The FCC drew criticism in 2005 from the broadcast industry for carrying children's programming requirements to digital television.

TELEVISION RATINGS AND THE V-CHIP

Congress also used the Telecommunications Act to respond to growing concern over potentially objectionable television content. To allow parents increased control over the types of television content their children could view, the law mandated that all television sets sold in the United States be equipped with *V-chips*, devices that could block programming based on an electronic ratings system. Moreover, the act also ordered broadcasters to develop a ratings system to work in conjunction with the V-chip. The development of a television ratings system was the subject of some debate, and the initial ratings system offered by broadcasters to satisfy the requirements of the act was eventually modified. Critics took issue with the original age-based television ratings system, which suggested that programs were suitable for children of certain ages. Numerous parent and activist groups argued that such ratings gave parents little information regarding the nature of television content; the result of their complaints was the inclusion of content labels to denote the presence of sex, violence, objectionable language, and so on. This modified television ratings system is in use today by most television networks. Despite the presence of television ratings, the V-chip has yet to enjoy widespread use among parents. Research has suggested that the vast majority of parents do not actively use the V-chip to prevent their children from being exposed to objectionable content. This failure is largely attributed to lack of familiarity with the ratings themselves and difficulty understanding how to activate the V-chip technology.

—R. Glenn Cummins

See also Children's Television Act of 1990; Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Movies, Rating Systems and; Rating Systems, Parental Use of; Regulation (various entries); Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; V-Chip (Violence Chip)

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TELEVISION, ADDICTION TO

People throughout the industrialized world typically devote about 3 hours a day to watching television. In many societies, this easily constitutes half of all a person's leisure time or, calculated another way, 9 full years of a 75-year life span. Nine years is even more remarkable if we consider that we sleep roughly one third of the life span and are therefore only left with 50 waking years not watching TV.

The term *addiction* has been extended to a whole host of nondrug behaviors, from gambling and sexuality to video gaming, television viewing, and Internet use. Some experts define addiction as biological dependence on a substance. If the addicted person no longer ingests the substance, he or she may experience unpleasant and often disorienting biological withdrawal symptoms. In this sense, applying the term *addiction* term to the use of electronic media or even gambling and sexual activity may be both wrong and misleading.

Others would argue that because all pleasurable experiences have a biological component, the traditional notions of biological addiction could still apply to sex, gambling, television viewing, or Internet use—even though with no substance involved—if a person becomes extremely dependent on that form of pleasure and feels horrible if no longer engaged in the behavior. This entry, however, focuses on television

addiction as a dependence on television that is not defined in part as biological dependence.

Even apart from biological factors, however, television viewing can be self-perpetuating and can produce psychological dependency that is of considerable significance. Furthermore, heavy and prolonged viewing go hand in hand with television dependence, and a considerable range of effects, from obesity to foreshortened attention span, have been hypothesized or shown to result from heavy and prolonged viewing. Thus, understanding how television dependence develops and is reinforced is of real import.

Most people believe television viewing can be addictive. North American surveys have found that roughly 10% of adults believe that *they* are addicted, but 65% to 70% report believing that *others* are addicted. And many millions experience misgivings about how much they view. In a 1990 Gallup poll, 42% of adult Americans reported believing that they spent "too much time watching television."

Part of what holds people's attention to television is the "orienting response." First described by Ivan Pavlov in 1927, the orienting response is an instinctive visual (or auditory) reaction to any sudden or novel stimulus in the environment. Byron Reeves of Stanford University and Esther Thorson at the University of Missouri and their colleagues first used the EEG in 1985 to test whether the simple formal features of television (cuts, edits, zooms, pans, sudden noises, and so on) might activate the orienting response, thereby causing attention to be drawn to the screen. Reeves and Thorson and their team concluded that the formal features of cuts, edits, and movement did indeed command involuntary responses, which may have developed as a result of the evolutionary importance of detecting movement. They noted that it is the form rather than the content of television that is unique.

Music videos and other forms of advertising that frequently use rapid intercutting are thus particularly apt to hold attention. The orienting response may best explain typical viewer reports such as, "If a television is on, I just can't keep my eyes off it," "I don't want to watch as much as I do but I can't help it. It makes me watch it," and "I feel hypnotized when I watch television."

Dependence on the medium appears to develop for many as a result of a need to escape negative feelings or to help fill time or an emotional vacuum. In repeated studies by Robert McIlwraith (1998) of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Manitoba, the 10% of university students and adults who call themselves TV addicts on surveys are significantly more likely than the 90% of self-reported nonaddicted viewers to report using television to cope with negative moods such as loneliness, sadness, anxiety, and anger. McIlwraith also finds self-proclaimed addicted viewers to be significantly more neurotic and introverted. On a measure called the Short Imaginal Processes Inventory (SIPI), he finds the TV addicts to be more easily bored and distractible and to have poorer attentional control than the nonaddicted. The addicted also often report using TV to distract themselves from unpleasant thoughts and to fill time. A 1990 study by Robert Kubey and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi compared light viewers (who watch less than 2 hours a day) and heavy viewers (more than 4 hours). Heavy viewers reported feeling significantly worse when alone and when in unstructured situations such as waiting in line or when "between" activities.

APPLICATION OF THE *DSM–IV* SUBSTANCE ABUSE CRITERIA

The official diagnostic manual used by psychotherapists throughout North America, the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,* Fourth Edition (*DSM–IV*; 1994), no longer uses the term *addiction.* Instead, the term used is *substance dependence.* Using the *DSM–IV* for the purpose of illustration, Kubey (1996) has suggested that if television were a substance (as it could be because light particles are taken into the body when people view), many people who watch television could be given a diagnosis of dependence. Indeed, Dr. Allen J. Frances, who oversaw the most recent revision of the manual, concluded, "Under the broader definition, many kinds of compulsive behavior could be considered addictive, including obsessive sex or compulsive television viewing" (Goleman, 1990, p. C8).

Kubey suggested that some people's behaviors with television parallel as many as five of the seven *DSM–IV* criteria used for diagnosing substance dependence (only three of these criteria must be applicable in the same 12-month period to make a diagnosis of dependence). As with substances, with regard to television viewing, (1) people do spend a great deal of time using it; (2) people use it more often than they intend; (3) people make repeated unsuccessful efforts to reduce use; (4) people withdraw from or give up important social, family, or occupational activities; (5) people report "withdrawal"-like symptoms of subjective discomfort when use stops.

HOW DEPENDENCE MAY DEVELOP

Within moments of sitting or lying down and pushing a TV set's power button, many viewers will report feeling more relaxed than they did before. Because relaxation occurs quickly, people readily learn to associate viewing with relaxation. The association is positively reinforced through simple operant conditioning because viewers remain relaxed throughout viewing, *and* it is negatively reinforced via the stress and dysphoric rumination that sometimes occur during idle time without TV or once the set is turned off.

The quick onset of relaxation is particularly telling when compared to that produced by certain drugs that are known to be habit forming or addictive. As Alvin Swonger and Larry Constantine (1976) have written, "The attribute of a drug that most contributes to its abuse liability is not its ability to produce tolerance or physical dependence but rather its ability to reinforce the drug-taking behaviors" (p. 235). This is why both the speed of a drug's effect and how quickly it leaves the body are often critical factors in whether or not dependence develops. And, of course, reinforcement need not be experienced at all consciously for it to occur or to be a powerful motivator of behavior.

Some tranquilizers that are fast-acting, for example, or whose "half-lives" are very short—half the drug leaves the body more rapidly compared to other drugs—are much more likely to cause dependence precisely because the user is more prone to become aware that the drug is working or that its effects are wearing off. When this happens, the tendency to turn to the drug again for relief will be that much greater.

Relative to other means available to bring about relaxation (and distraction), television is among the quickest and certainly among the cheapest. Unlike conversation or games, one does not need anyone else to watch TV, and viewing provides faster and cheaper relaxation than does the use of drugs or alcohol.

DO TELEVISION VIEWERS EXPERIENCE WITHDRAWAL?

If the television habit is so easy to develop and holds so many millions so readily, do people experience anything akin to withdrawal if they stop viewing? More than 40 years ago, Gary Steiner (1963) collected fascinating individual accounts following a household's loss of a television set due to malfunction—this was back in the days when many families still had only one set: "The family walked around like a chicken without a head." "It was terrible. We did nothing—my husband and I talked." "Screamed constantly. Children bothered me and my nerves were on edge. Tried to interest them in games, but impossible. TV is part of them."

In experiments where families have voluntarily stopped viewing, or been paid do so, typically for a week or a month, increased tension among family members has been described, and many families could not complete the agreed period of abstinence. Charles Winick's (1988) review of studies of families whose television sets were in repair led him to the following conclusion:

> The first three or four days for most persons were the worst, even in many homes where viewing was minimal and where there were other ongoing activities. In over half of all the households, during these first few days of loss, the regular routines were disrupted, family members had difficulties in dealing with the newly available time, anxiety and aggressions were expressed . . . People living alone tended to be bored and irritated . . . By the second week, a move toward adaptation to the situation was common. (pp. 221–222)

Is viewing addictive? If we only mean by the term that one can easily develop dependence on the activity, the answer would be yes. But to be more properly classified as a true dependence or addiction, some would argue that an activity must also be harmful, interfering with the quality of the rest of one's life. And so, on this score, the answer is "it depends." Most people can watch television without their viewing interfering with the rest of life. In its easy provision of relaxation and escape, in small doses, television can probably be beneficial. For lonely people without other resources, it may be a godsend. But when the viewing habit interferes with the ability to grow, to learn new things, to lead an active life, then viewing indeed becomes an obstacle in life and perhaps deserves the label of addiction. To be sure, with the incredible ubiquity of electronic media, self-control over media habits is more of a challenge today than it was even in the recent past.

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE VIEWING

There are ways that individuals or families can achieve better control of their viewing habits if that is their goal. These are also listed in Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi's article on so-called television addiction in *Scientific American* in February 2002.

Among the suggestions they (and others) have made are these: Raise awareness (keep a log of how much you or family members view), promote alternative activities (individuals or families can make a list of activities that might be done at home instead of viewing), exert will power (recognize that almost as soon as one turns the set off, it becomes much easier to attend to other activities), enforce limits (for oneself and especially for children), view selectively (use a TV guide to pick those programs, and *only* those programs, that one will watch that day), employ the VCR (don't let program schedules interfere with your schedule), make television less available or go "cold turkey" (some have substantially reduced their viewing by ending a cable subscription, reducing the number of TVs in the household, or moving a TV to a room where it is less comfortable to view).

—Robert Kubey

See also Television, Motivations for Viewing of; TV-Turnoff Week

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TELEVISION, ATTENTION AND

The mass media often depict children sitting zombie-like in front of the television, mesmerized by images and sounds. While early theorizing about children's attention to television conformed to this view, a large body of research suggests that infants and children play an active role in their consumption of television content. Younger children use formal features—such as sound effects and animation—as indicators of program comprehensibility. As children get older, they rely less on formal features and make decisions to pay attention largely on the basis of television content. Programming that is neither too challenging nor too simple for a child will garner the highest levels of attention.

REACTIVE AND ACTIVE THEORIES OF ATTENTION

Jerome Singer's reactive theory of attention proposes that children's attention to television is largely controlled by nonmeaningful, formal features of television programming, such as sound effects and camera movement. According to Singer, children's attention to television is passive and involuntary, and comprehension flows automatically from attention. In contrast to the reactive theory of attention, Daniel Anderson and colleagues contend that children's visual attention to television is primarily driven by comprehension; that is, children judge the comprehensibility of content and then decide whether or not to pay attention.

To test the active and reactive theories of attention, researchers conducted an experiment where one group of children watched an episode of *Sesame Street* with toys available, while a second group watched the show without toys. In comparison to children who watched with toys, children in the no-toys group spent close to twice the amount of time visually oriented to the screen. However, there were no differences between the groups in terms of comprehension, suggesting that increased visual attention to television does not automatically result in increased comprehension.

In another study designed to test the active theory of attention, the comprehensibility of *Sesame Street* segments was manipulated by (1) replacing the original dialogue with a Greek translation, (2) replacing the original dialogue with backward speech, and (3) randomly rearranging scenes. A fourth condition consisted

of unedited (normal) segments. Children spent the most time visually oriented to the normal segments while the backward dialogue received the least amount of attention. The fact that children's attention to *Sesame Street* varied across conditions, even though the visual formal features were the same, suggests that comprehensibility is indeed a factor in guiding children's visual attention to television.

Subsequent research directly compared the extent to which formal features and comprehensibility guide children's attention to television. In one experiment, health-related television segments were manipulated to create two formats (child and adult) and three levels of comprehensibility or difficulty. The child format presented the health information using animation, children's voices, and upbeat music whereas the adult format presented the same information using live photography, adult male voices, and subtle background music. Difficulty was manipulated by changing the editing pace, the amount of repetition, and linguistic complexity. The child format elicited significantly greater attention among kindergartners than the adult format. Children's attention to television did not vary as a function of segment difficulty. These results suggest that formal features play a more important role in driving children's attention to television than comprehensibility; however, some researchers have argued that children use formal features to judge the comprehensibility of television content.

FEATURE-SIGNAL HYPOTHESIS

Although there is little, if any, direct research support for the reactive theory of attention, research does suggest that certain categories of formal features reliably elicit attention from children. Specifically, movement, women's and children's voices, sound effects, music, laughter, and applause are generally associated with increased attention to television, whereas men's voices, long zooms, and still pictures are associated with a reduction in attention. Daniel Anderson and Elizabeth Lorch (1983) interpreted these findings within the framework of the active theory of attention, arguing that children use formal features as indicators of comprehensibility. Children pay attention to formal features that signal content intended for children, in other words, content that they are likely to understand. In this view, attention to formal features is not simply the result of an orienting response to perceptually salient stimuli; formal features are meaningful in the sense that they provide information about program comprehensibility. Other researchers, however, contend that while older children's attention to television may be guided by the information formal features provide, perceptual salience is an important predictor of young children's attention to television.

MODERATE-DISCREPANCY HYPOTHESIS

Most researchers agree that there is a curvilinear relationship between attention and content difficulty. This moderate-discrepancy hypothesis suggests that the relationship between attention and comprehensibility can be captured by an inverted-U-shape. Content that is either too difficult for children to understand or overly simple will receive minimal attention, while content that is moderately challenging will garner the most attention.

Recent research on children's attention to television, such as that by Patti Valkenburg and Marjolein Vroone, supports the moderate-discrepancy hypothesis. Television segments designed for adults (news and adult-targeted commercials) received significantly less attention than segments designed for children. In addition, the easiest child segment resulted in high levels of attention from the youngest children (6-to-18-month-olds) but relatively low levels of attention among older children (36-to-58-month-olds). In contrast, the most difficult child segment resulted in high levels of attention among older children but minimal attention from younger children. Valkenburg and Vroone's results also support developmental theories of attention to formal features. Scenes that resulted in the greatest attention among 6-to-18-month-olds contained a large number of salient formal features, such as applause, laughter, and strange sounds. In contrast, the 3- and 4-year-olds paid more attention to scenes with fewer salient formal features and appeared to direct their attention on the basis of television content. Valkenburg and Vroone also found support for Anderson and colleagues' hypothesis that children use formal features as indicators of comprehensibility. Across all age groups, even among infants, the initial scenes of adult-oriented content resulted in significant decreases in attention, whereas the initial scenes of child-oriented content led to dramatic increases in attention.

—Ariel R. Chernin and
Deborah L. Linebarger

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Formal Features; Information Processing, Active vs. Passive Models of; Television, Viewer Age and

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TELEVISION, CHILD VARIABLES AND USE OF

Television use can refer to the amount of television watching and the kinds of programs viewed; the reception of programs (interpreting, understanding, experiencing, interacting with them); the role of television in the individual's everyday life and lifestyle; and people getting access to the medium and taking part in TV production. This entry discusses the amount of television viewing by children and adolescents around the world. Variables that affect viewing include the degree of media access young viewers have; their age, gender, and socioeconomic background; parental influence; and the availability and scheduling of children's programming.

METHODOLOGY

Television use is often studied in quantitative surveys by means of measures such as reach (proportion of viewers of the whole population); viewing time (hours, minutes); share (of the total audience and of the total viewing time, respectively); and rating (defined as average reach) during a day or a week, during parts of the day, and for different programs and program categories. Although such figures appear exact, they vary greatly because of differences in data collection methods (diaries, questionnaires, face-to-face or telephone interviews, electronic people meters, etc.). The formulation of questions, the kind of sample (simple random sample, quota sample, etc., of individuals or households), and the number of nonresponses also play important roles. As a consequence, the resulting viewing figures are for the most part not statistically representative; that is, average figures represent the people in the specific survey, not the people in the selected population or the whole country. Comparisons between countries are therefore not reliable. Even figures generated by the same method, for example, the often-used people meter, are not internationally comparative but reflect more methodological than cultural differences. (In this case, quota samples are used, and in many nations, households in the countryside, with low socioeconomic status, and so on, are excluded.)

Moreover, television use is not regularly measured in most countries in the world, especially among children. For these reasons, the common question "How much do children use television (and other media) around the world?" cannot be answered with precision.

AMOUNT OF VIEWING

With the spread of satellite television since the end of the 1980s, there was more than a 100% increase in

TV access during just one decade. Although not all countries have a domestic broadcaster, all are now reached by one or more satellite channels. However, not all households in the world have a television set or can receive the channels. In large rural regions where there is no or little electricity, especially in low-income countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, battery-operated radio is the most used medium among both children and adults. Where television (or video) sets are few, viewing usually occurs outside the home (e.g., in cafés or village centers).

In richer countries, where the majority of children live in multimedia environments that often overflow with media devices, television is the most used medium by the average child. Despite conflicting reports, most show that with the infusion of more and more digital media, TV viewing has not decreased among children; rather, overall media use has increased as use of the Internet and video or computer games has been added.

At the same time, research indicates that the use of television (and other media) in countries with multimedia access is becoming increasingly differentiated. Although some children use media less than the average amount (despite access), other children are game or Internet enthusiasts, keen book readers, extreme television or video fans, and so on. However, in all these and still other media style groups, television is nevertheless on average the dominating medium. The absolute majority of children in these countries use television almost every day.

Children in richer countries are also increasingly using two or more media simultaneously (viewing, reading, listening to music, using the Internet, etc.). A U.S. study in 2003–2004 of 8-to-18-year-olds showed that simultaneous media use occurred for about a quarter of the time spent watching television. The same was true of the time spent on all media. This means that during the nearly 6 hours per day that this age group spent using all media, they were exposed to 8 hours of media messages.

VARIABLES AFFECTING TV VIEWING

The amount of television use depends on factors such as access to television; the child's age, gender, personality, needs, interests, and so on; the parents' sociocultural and socioeconomic position; parental viewing patterns; parental mediation of viewing; time in terms of weekdays versus weekends and seasons of the year; time of day when different kinds of television programs are shown; and the cultural, religious, political, and economic context of TV viewing. Some of these aspects are briefly commented on below.

Access

More television sets and channels result in increased television viewing. Thus, within the same country, the average child with many available TV channels watches more than children with fewer available channels, and children in homes with several TV sets watch on average more than children with only one set at home. In 2004, about 90% of 9-to-14-year-olds in Sweden had access to more than one TV at home, and the majority of 8-to-18-year-olds in the United States in 2003–2004 had a TV set in their own bedroom, while less than half of younger children had a TV set in the bedroom. Television sets are common in North America, Australia, and New Zealand, most countries in Europe, richer Asian countries, richer Arab countries, and several Latin American countries. The majority of children in most African, many Asian, and certain Latin American countries do not have access to TV at home or elsewhere, although the differences between cities and rural areas in the same country are often great. Bearing in mind that less than 20% of the 2 billion children on the globe live in the richer countries while more than 80% live in the so-called developing countries, there are very good reasons to talk about a television divide beside the more common expressions of digital and information divides.

Age

The majority of children in countries where television is widespread watch television more or less every day from the age of 2 to 3 years old. A U.S. study from 2003 found that about two fifths of those under 2 watched TV every day. Viewing then increases with age—in some countries, up to the early teens, after which a slight decrease occurs (e.g., in Argentina, Chile, Israel, the Netherlands, South Korea), whereas in other countries, there is no such decrease (e.g., in Australia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Lebanon, Philippines, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom). Some studies of TV use in the United States report a decrease among teens while others do not. Reported average

daily viewing times in the countries mentioned here vary for younger children between about 1½ and about 3 hours and for school-age children (up to the early teens) between about 1½ and 3½ hours. Because of methodological biases such as those described above, the figures cannot indicate in which countries children watch most. Average figures also hide large individual variations—from very light to very heavy viewers.

Gender

In some countries where television is widespread, boys watch slightly more television than girls, but in other countries with much television, there are no such gender differences. Some studies also suggest that in countries such as India and Tunisia, where girls' activities outside the home are restricted, girls may be more likely than boys to use media at home and may watch television more often. Gender differences in TV use are more noticeable when it comes to kinds of programs watched.

Socioeconomic Background

In countries with few media, children of low-income parents often use television (and other media) less because they do not have access to TV sets. In countries with many media, children of low-income parents on average devote more time to television (and to video and video games) than children of high-income parents. Children of high-income parents use print media, computers, and the Internet more often than children of low-income parents.

Parental Influence

Parents' TV behavior serves as an example that influences their children's viewing to a great extent—both amount of TV viewing and preferences for different TV programs.

Research on the impact of parental rules on children's TV viewing are conflicting, and the older the child, the fewer the rules. Even if there are rules, they are not always followed. In many countries, such as in Egypt, middle-class parents do not have time to regulate their children's viewing, and working-class parents often have a more generous attitude to television. For instance, poor families in Buenos Aires watch a great deal of television without guilt because television plays a compensating role in the sense that TV viewing is one of their very few opportunities for entertainment.

However, children whose parents do impose rules spend less time watching television than do other children. *Active mediation* in terms of talking to children about television is also usually more successful than *restrictive mediation* (rules) and simple *coviewing* by parents in reducing children's television use and modifying its influences.

With more and more television sets in the home, children are less likely to be supervised, and parents' coviewing, rule setting, and active mediation diminish.

Programming

In countries that produce diverse high-quality children's programs that are shown at appropriate times, younger children most often watch these programs, and their viewing of adult programming is more a consequence of the child's wish to be with the family in front of the television. Children also often prefer locally produced children's programs to imported cartoons. However, even in countries with a rich supply of good children's programming, an interest in adult programs, mainly entertainment and fiction, appears when growing children begin to orient themselves more toward the peer group, often around the age of 7 to 9. Good programs directed specifically at the *tweens* (from 8 or 9 to 12 or 13 years old) also attract viewers in that age group.

However, a great many TV stations and channels around the world do not offer much in the way of children's programming, or if they do, it consists primarily of imported cartoons. Or, children's programs may be scheduled for times when few children have the opportunity to gather in front of the screen because they are in preschool or school (their programs are scheduled only at times not attractive for adults). As a consequence, the great majority of children with access to television all over the world watch adult programming from an early age, in the afternoon, evening, and often late at night. Boys are generally more interested in sports, "nasty" comedies, and action, whereas girls are more interested in relationship dramas (e.g., soap operas, so-called reality TV) and calmer amusement than boys are. Children watch the news and other informative programming to a much lesser degree.

—Cecilia von Feilitzen

See also Asia, Media Use in; China, Media Use in; Digital Divide; Europe, Media Use in; India, Media Use in; Japan, Media Use in; Latin America, Media Use in; Television, International Viewing Patterns and

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TELEVISION, HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS ON

Concern about the quality of children's television has waxed and waned throughout television's history. When children's advocates (usually parents and educators, and occasionally lawmakers) are outspoken about the need for television that nurtures and educates young people, broadcasters create a wider array of programming for them. During periods when this issue goes unaddressed, it is usually accompanied by children's programming that is formulaic and static. Today, the Internet, TiVo, satellite, and various cable options are part of children's television experience. Even in this complex television environment, it is still possible to predict the general landscape of children's programming. A common thread in television's history is that when broadcasters treat children as a unique audience with specific needs and abilities, their programming is more diverse in content, format, and scheduling; when programming is produced for children without this consideration, their shows become increasingly uniform.

THE EARLY YEARS OF CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

When television was introduced to consumers, one method used by broadcasters to attract people to the new medium was to offer children's programming. During the first years of broadcast television, from 1948 to 1952, a relatively large percentage of television shows were specifically devoted to children and aired during periods when children were most likely to watch, on weekday evenings between 6 and 8 p.m.

As television sets proliferated in homes throughout the 1950s, the hours devoted to children's programming dropped, and its time slot changed from early evenings to Saturday mornings. This development may have resulted in part from economic changes. As television sets increasingly penetrated U.S. homes, broadcasters no longer felt the need to promote television sets to a wary public. Instead, they could attract money from advertising sponsors by competing for the millions of viewers who already had sets. During early evening prime-time hours, broadcasters hoped to maximize the number of viewers by replacing shows

specifically for children with family programming designed to appeal to the entire household.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, broadcasters established what became the standard format of a children's show: a 30-minute production appearing once a week, usually on Saturday mornings when adults were least likely to watch and when children were free to view with fewer time constraints.

During this period, the content of children's shows changed from live-action adventures to animated fare. This shift grew out of the newly developed, low-cost animation techniques of William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, the exhaustion of the archives of older live-action films that were broadcast as reruns, and the desire to provide content for the growing numbers of color televisions being sold at low cost.

DIVERSITY IN PROGRAMMING

Given the popularity of low-cost animation, combined with the Saturday morning time slot now staked out exclusively for children, it is not surprising that the 1960s were characterized by a decline in the diversity of formats, content, and scheduling of children's programming. Toward the end of the decade, the percentage of animated shows, shows airing once a week, and shows without child characters increased. There was also a trend toward fantasy and action-adventure themes with mostly male, often superhuman animated characters as the main protagonists.

By the end of the 1960s, the uniformity of children's programming, the advertisements that accompanied shows, and the prevalence of violent themes had provoked the consternation of policymakers and concerned citizens. Organizations such as Action for Children's Television (ACT) sought to limit advertising and violence in children's programming, and in 1970, the group filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to ban commercials from children's programs. ACT was able to obtain limited concessions in subsequent years, such as prohibition of advertising specific products and reducing the amount of time spent on commercials during children's shows.

The shift in attention toward children's television at the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s sparked a trend toward more diverse program formats and content, as well as increased funding for educational programming with the establishment of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service. The percentage of other formats (live-action, puppetry, or some combination of the two) increased during this period, as did the presence of recurring child actors, the variety of content beyond action-adventure themes, and the number of shows airing at times other than Saturday morning. Memorable shows that began during this time include the *After School Specials* on ABC, *Sesame Street, The Electric Company,* and *Make a Wish.*

During the 1970s, a technique known as a video mosaic format became prevalent. It incorporated a number of segments into an extended program lasting for an hour or more. By placing short "information spots" between shows, broadcasters carried viewers from one show to the next. Examples of these short information spots included *Multiplication Rock, Schoolhouse Rock,* and *In the Know.* These spots were short and aired at irregular times, but they also allowed networks to diversify their fantasy-based, action-adventure format to some extent. Another device within this mosaic format involved human or animated hosts acting as bridges between shows. A station's Saturday morning children's lineup now came to resemble one long show.

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICY

Children's television programming was transformed again during the early 1980s, when renewed government preference for deregulation was accompanied by the dramatic growth of cable television and the increased number of VCRs in American homes. The diversity in formats and scheduling of children's programming increased somewhat with the growth of cable channels devoted primarily to children. However, while the number of shows increased, there was little change in content, with the majority still being animated action-adventure shows.

The 1980s trend toward deregulation allowed broadcasters to use children's shows essentially as a tool to sell merchandise. Immediately after a show such as *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* or *Power Rangers* aired, a commercial featuring toys based on its characters could be inserted. In response to the increasing number of such programs, ACT and other advocacy groups continued to lobby lawmakers

regarding the need for a system of oversight of children's television.

Although some children's shows created during the 1980s and 1990s deviated from the standard fare, such as *Ghostwriter, 3-2-1 Contact,* and *Blue's Clues,* the public outcry over children's exposure to television advertisements and violence reemerged. ACT and others called on policymakers to rein in broadcasters. In 1990, the Children's Television Act was passed, requiring stations to provide 3 hours of educational programming per week in order to have licenses renewed. In 1992, the networks announced they would limit gratuitous violence and include onscreen advisories prior to strong programming.

In 1996, lawmakers introduced a new version of the Telecommunications Act, requiring the installation of an electronic device (a V-chip) in televisions that allowed families to block violent shows. The legislation also called on networks to create a ratings system that would designate specific content depicting degrees of violence and other controversial content.

—*David Ian Cohen*

See also Action for Children's Television (ACT); Advertising on Children's Programs; Cartoons, History of; Children's Television Act of 1990; Children's Television Charter; Media Effects, History of Research on; Sesame Workshop; Telecommunications Act of 1996; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; Television Violence, Susceptibility to

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TELEVISION, INTERNATIONAL VIEWING PATTERNS AND

Patterns of television viewing can be defined by the frequency and duration of use, by the distribution of viewing episodes over the day, by the number and types of channels watched, by the genres and programs preferred, and by the social situation in front of the screen. From an international comparative perspective, these characteristics are variable because of differences between television systems and between cultural and social patterns of television viewing. Currently, we cannot rely on systematic and comprehensive comparative research on these differences, in particular for children and adolescents. Therefore, this entry examines evidence from studies covering different regions of the world and addresses some differences in viewing patterns.

The most obvious and prominent indicator of television viewing is related to the time devoted to this medium. The international data on viewing time per individual, as compiled in the annual publication, *Television 2005: International Key Facts*, are marked by some methodological differences in how viewing behavior is measured. Although most of the industrialized countries use people meter systems for audience research, there are subtle differences in the definition of *viewing,* the populations studied, whether watching videos or recorded TV programs is included, and so on. In general, however, the daily viewing time for adults in most industrialized countries is more than 3½ hours (210 minutes). The United States has a particularly high viewing time (almost 300 minutes in 2004, see Table 1); in Europe, Italy and some Central and Eastern European countries show the highest figures. Remarkable exceptions are the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden) as well as Austria and Switzerland; the average viewing time in these countries is below 3 hours per day.

Substantial differences can be observed regarding the viewing times of children. Here it is particularly important to note the different age groups defined as *children.* Within the selected group of industrialized countries shown in Table 1, the average viewing time of children varies between 221 minutes (Hungary) and 88 minutes per day (Sweden). A difference of more than 2 hours per day per child indicates a massive difference in the respective children's everyday lives and activities,

Table 1 Viewing Time per Individual in 2004 (in minutes per day)

	Adults		*Children*	
	Age group	*Minutes per day*	*Age group*	*Minutes per day*
Hungary	18+	268	4–14	221
Turkey	20+	233	5–11	211
United States	18+	297	2–11	196
Russia	18+	217	4–12	171
Italy	15+	245	4–14	163
Poland	16+	246	4–15	161
Spain	16+	221	4–12	151
United Kingdom	16+	228	4–15	144
Japan	20+	223	10–19	132
France	15+	212	4–10	129
Germany	14+	215	3–13	93
Sweden	15+	159	3–14	88

SOURCE: Selected data from IP (2005). *Television 2005. International Key Facts,* p. 34. Paris/Cologne: IP.

and this must be considered whenever we deal with international comparisons of children's and adolescents' lives. Why children in some countries spend much more time with television than their peers elsewhere is hard to answer. Some have suggested that part of the explanation lies in the difference between the rather visually oriented Catholic cultures compared to the rather verbally oriented Protestant cultures. Others have pointed to the contrast between heavily commercialized television systems and systems with a strong position of public service broadcasters. However, these arguments do not explain all the differences to be observed.

Differences with regard to viewing patterns also occur when people watch television. In almost all countries, television reaches its maximum audience in the evening. However, there are differences regarding the exact time. Whereas Belorussian or Macedonian television viewing reaches its peak at 8 p.m., the respective times in other countries are later: 8:30 p.m. in the Czech Republic and Slovakia; 8:45 p.m. in Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, and Switzerland; 9 p.m. in Austria, Germany, and Denmark; 9:15 p.m. in France, Italy, and the United Kingdom; 9:30 p.m. in Flanders, Japan, and Portugal; 9:45 p.m. in Turkey and the United States; 10 p.m. in the Netherlands; and finally 10:30 p.m. in Greece and Spain. These observations refer to intercultural differences in the organization of the day, which also influences the everyday lives of children and when they watch television. Another difference between countries concerns whether watching television is mainly concentrated in the evening, as is the case, for example, in Nordic countries and Germany; or whether there is a second prime time around 1 p.m., as is the case in Italy and Spain; or whether there is yet another strong peak in the morning, for example, in Japan and Finland. Children's patterns of television viewing rely heavily on the institutional time schedules of their country, that is, when they return from school, when parents return from work, when families normally have their dinner, and so on.

Beyond these structural conditions, children's patterns of viewing behavior are also influenced by the number of channels available to them. In countries with a small number of broadcast channels and a low distribution of cable and satellite, few children's programs are shown on the general channels. Their television environment is very different from that of children in multichannel environments. For example, in the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom, many children can select from several dedicated children's channels at any time of the day. This larger choice does not necessarily mean that children use a wide range of channels; rather, they develop a favorite repertoire of channels to which they devote most of their viewing time. Another consequence of multichannel environments is an increasing fragmentation

of viewing behavior within families; because members of each age group have programs all day that are specifically targeted to them, they watch their own programs rather than viewing programs together.

Regarding children's preferences in television programs, there is a striking commonality across almost all countries: Children like cartoons. Because cartoons can be transferred to other cultures more easily than any other kind of television program, children's programming is a highly globalized market sector. Most children who watch television know some Walt Disney figures or, more recently, some figures from the Japanese anime productions (e.g., Pokémon). This does not mean that these global programs have the same meaning for children in different cultural settings. To the contrary, many studies have shown that children take these programs as symbolic material. Against the background of their social and cultural conditions, and given their current developmental tasks, they play with this material, construct their identity, and learn about options to cope with certain situations. The results of this process might differ substantially among children from different countries.

—Uwe Hasebrink

See also Europe, Media Use in; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of

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TELEVISION, MORAL MESSAGES ON

Television is a medium with great potential to influence the lives of children and adolescents. However, the bulk of prior research regarding the impact of television viewing on children and adolescents has focused on possible negative influences of television. For example, ample research suggests that watching violence on television contributes to aggressiveness in children and adolescents. Research has also reported links between television content and adolescents' sexual behaviors and attitudes. It seems that policymakers, educators, and the general public also tend to focus on the negative effects of television viewing. Yet, not all television content is negative; positive moral messages can be found in a significant amount of television content. Although research regarding moral messages on television is limited, it suggests that exposure to such messages tends to have a moderate effect on the attitudes and behaviors of children and adolescents. These associations, however, are often mediated by other factors such as characteristics of the child, the context in which the message occurs in the television program, and factors in the environment in which the child views the program.

CONTENT OF MORAL MESSAGES

There are differing opinions on what might be considered moral messages on television. Social scientists tend to divide morality into justice-based morality, with its focus on issues of fairness and equality, and prosocial morality or a morality of care, which emphasizes kindness and helping. Thus, ideas or behaviors presented on television that embody the values of justice or care might be considered moral messages. These messages might appear in the form of proscriptions or prohibitions. Proscriptions are "thou shalts," which encourage behaviors that should be engaged in (such as helping others), whereas prohibitions are "thou shalt nots," which discourage actions that should not be performed (such as causing harm to others).

Analyses of the content of television programming suggest that television might portray as many moral messages as it does immoral messages (i.e., messages that promote or condone things such as violence and dishonesty). Ironically, some programs intended to convey moral messages—cartoons, for example—also contain significant violent content. Programs targeted at preschoolers contain the highest proportion of moral messages, followed by those directed to children and adolescents, with adult programs having the lowest ratio of moral to immoral messages. In addition, programs broadcast earlier in the day tend to have a higher moral to immoral messages ratio than those later in the

day. Thus, programs most noted for incorporating moral messages are early morning shows for preschoolers such as *Barney*, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, and *Sesame Street*, which convey moral messages such as the importance of honesty, kindness, and fairness. Interestingly, some programs originally intended for adults that became popular with children (such as *The Cosby Show* and *7th Heaven*), also have a strong emphasis on moral messages.

EFFECTS OF MORAL MESSAGES

There are several possible mechanisms by which exposure to moral messages on television might positively impact children and adolescents. First, moral messages might be conveyed through modeling of moral behaviors. Psychologist Albert Bandura originally provided evidence of modeling by showing that when children see adults on television acting violently toward an inflatable doll, the children tend to act violently toward the same doll when given the opportunity. This mechanism of modeling may also facilitate the learning of moral behaviors. For example, children may learn the importance of sharing by observing people on a television program who are engaged in sharing. Research has found some support for this idea. For instance, in one experiment, a group of children was shown a prosocial program where a boy risked his life to save a puppy, while another group of children was instead shown a neutral program with no modeling of moral behavior. Then, both groups of children were asked to play a game in which they could earn points by repeatedly pushing a button; the more times they pushed the button, the more points they earned. However, they were also told to listen to puppies in a distant kennel and push a help button when the puppies seemed distressed. Children who had seen the prosocial program were more likely to push the button to help the puppies than children who watched the neutral program. In short, it seems that characters on television may teach moral messages by example.

Another possible mechanism is that programs might actually verbally promote moral prescriptions and prohibitions. For example, parents in a television program might talk to their child about the importance of being honest and not cheating on a test in school. Also, in some programs for young children, it is common for the characters to address the viewer directly when promoting a moral message. The few studies that have directly examined this mechanism have found some support for its effectiveness in conveying moral messages, although the results are less consistent than those for modeling. In line with this, research on parenting suggests that parental modeling of moral behaviors is more consistently and strongly linked to children's learning and behaviors than verbalizations such as preaching moral values or prompting moral action.

MEDIATING FACTORS

Researchers have identified several factors that might mediate the effects of televised moral messages on children and adolescents. First, some individual characteristics of children affect the way they respond to moral messages. For instance, age seems to be a mediator, in that younger children tend to be more strongly influenced by moral messages on television that older children and adolescents. Gender and ethnicity are typically not mediators of the effects of moral messages. Second, the context in which a moral message is conveyed in a program seems to moderate its effect. For instance, televised moral messages tend to have weaker effects in situations where they compete with immoral messages. As an example, the modeling of prosocial behavior on television seems to more strongly influence prosocial behaviors of children when it is presented in a positive context, rather then in a context intermixed with aggression. Last, the environment in which the child watches the television program can mediate the effects of televised moral messages. For example, when watching televised moral messages is accompanied by additional instruction from adults, such as teachers or parents, there tends to be a stronger positive effect on children.

Given these findings, more attention should be paid to possible positive effects of television programs on child development. However, an important caveat is that although television seems to have the capacity to influence children and adolescents in positive ways, television is only one of many factors involved in the socialization of the upcoming generation.

—Sam A. Hardy and Glenda B. Claborne

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Aggression, Television and; Electronic Games, Moral Behavior in; Television, Morality and Identification With Characters on; Television, Prosocial Behavior and; Television, Prosocial Content of; Television Violence

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TELEVISION, MORALITY AND IDENTIFICATION WITH CHARACTERS ON

Moral development is often conceptualized as having two components: moral judgments and moral reasoning. Moral judgments involve children's judgments about how right or wrong particular behaviors are, and moral reasoning is their ability to offer explanations for their judgments. At a young age, children's moral schemas are simple and egocentric. As they mature, children develop more complex moral schemas that take into account the needs and concerns of those in their social environment and eventually the larger society.

Although theories differ with regard to the processes that underlie moral development, most agree that children's social interactions—with parents, peers, and others—play a key role. Television is also an important socializing agent in the lives of children and adolescents. The medium offers a wide variety of models interacting with others in a variety of contexts, thus providing salient moral lessons regarding what is right and wrong.

Research shows that exposure to particular types of television content is associated with less advanced moral reasoning about the type of behaviors depicted (e.g., violence, sexual behaviors). For example, adolescents heavily exposed to TV shows featuring sexual indiscretions such as adultery judged similar behaviors as less bad than those with less exposure. Similarly, children who viewed more fantasy violence were more likely to believe that aggression was an acceptable solution. In addition, several studies found that exposure to violent fantasy and reality-based programs was associated with less advanced moral reasoning about violence. Evidence suggests that the link between TV violence and moral reasoning may be mediated by perspective taking with more violence exposure associated with less advanced perspective taking, which in turn leads to less advanced moral reasoning.

Typically, research on television's role in moral development has considered television in general or particular types of content (e.g., violence, sexual content), but it has not explicitly examined identification with television characters. Identification is one outcome of television viewing that is believed to mediate audience responses. In the media literature, the term *identification* has been used in many ways, but two definitions seem to have been employed most often. First, identification sometimes refers to the process by which an individual puts him- or herself in the place of a character and vicariously participates in the character's experiences during a program. Second, many scholars have recognized that the process of identification can extend beyond the viewing situation. The phrase *wishful identification* has been used to describe this type of response, a psychological process through which an individual desires or attempts to become like another person. For example, in one study, the most common form of celebrity attachment reported by adolescents was *identificatory attachment,* or the desire to be like or become the celebrity.

Research indicates that identification with media characters can have significant social and psychological consequences. Much evidence shows that audience members often make changes in their appearance, attitudes, values, activities, and other characteristics in order to become more like admired celebrities or media characters. Identification with media characters also affects adoption or rejection of specific behaviors or life goals. Not surprisingly, the characters whom viewers report wanting to be like possess a variety of desirable attributes. One reason that fantasy violence may affect moral judgments and reasoning lies in the nature of the violent portrayals, with much of the violence committed by attractive characters with whom young viewers are inclined to identify. In addition, violent narratives tend to focus on the characters who commit violence, rather than on

the victims. Particularly problematic are the TV heroes or "good" characters who use aggression; content analyses confirm that this is common on television. Several studies found that children and adolescents, especially males, identified more strongly with characters and celebrities whom they perceived as more aggressive. There is evidence that identification with aggressors increases the adverse consequences of viewed violence. Nonetheless, this type of effect is not inevitable. One study found that increasing involvement with the victim, by encouraging children to take his perspective, reduced the adverse perceptual and behavioral effects of the violent program, especially for boys.

Identification with media characters and celebrities can also have positive moral consequences for viewers if the media models exhibit prosocial behaviors. One study found that children as early as first grade were able to identify the prosocial lessons in television situation comedies and that those who viewed more prosocial sitcoms—especially children with a better understanding of the lessons—engaged in more prosocial behavior. Many young people select prosocial media characters and celebrities as favorites. One study found that children's wishful identification with favorite characters was associated with perceiving them as having positive social characteristics (e.g., kind, helpful). As young people mature, they become more likely to take moral judgments into account when responding to media portrayals. There is evidence, for example, that adolescents sometimes explicitly reject antisocial characters as role models, regarding them instead as examples of how *not* to behave.

—Cynthia A. Hoffner

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Television, Moral Messages on

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TELEVISION, MOTIVATIONS FOR VIEWING OF

In its early years, the study of mass communication focused on media content as a prime cause of media effects. Research, however, failed to provide evidence of strong and uniform effects. Scholars began to speculate that the media might have no effects on those who have no use for it. The uses and gratifications perspective of media research is an audience-centered approach. Instead of focusing on what media *do to* people, it focuses on what people *do with* media. According to uses and gratifications, people's reasons for using television, or television viewing motivations, are important because they directly influence how

much television people watch as well as the content that they select.

Research to identify the motivations behind television viewing began in the 1970s. Greenberg (1974) asked British schoolchildren to write essays about why they liked to watch television. These essays revealed eight general reasons for watching television: to pass time, to forget, to learn about things, to learn about myself, for arousal, for relaxation, for companionship, and as a habit. Rubin (1977) continued this line of research with U.S. schoolchildren. Based on his research, as well as other explorations with a variety of adult samples, nine general reasons for watching television emerge: for relaxation (e.g., to unwind), for companionship (e.g., to overcome feelings of loneliness), out of habit (e.g., a customary, regular activity), to pass time (e.g., to occupy empty time), for entertainment (e.g., enjoyment), to facilitate social interaction (e.g., for conversational topics), for information (e.g., to learn things), for arousal (e.g., excitement), and to escape (e.g., to get away from daily pressures). Typically, passing time and entertainment motives are children's strongest reasons for watching television; watching to learn and to escape are the motives children rate lowest.

Research on children and adolescents confirms that television viewing motivations are linked to television viewing levels and program choices. In general, the more motivated children and adolescents are to watch television for any reason, the more they watch television. Different types of motives, however, are associated with watching different types of programs. Watching television to learn is correlated with watching children's programming; watching to pass time is linked to watching comedies, but not news. Watching for escape is connected to watching more comedy and less children's educational programming and news.

Another central tenet of uses and gratifications theory is that people's personal characteristics and social situations influence the reasons that they have for watching television. There are few gender differences in children's television viewing motives. Evidence suggests that girls are more likely to watch for companionship reasons than boys. Age, however, has a significant impact on motives. In general, younger children are more motivated to watch television. This finding probably reflects the expanding range of experiences that opens up as children become older. An interesting study by Zohoori (1988) compared the television viewing motives of native-born and immigrant U.S. children. The researchers found that immigrant children are significantly more likely to watch television for information reasons: to learn about others and themselves. Immigrant children might see television as a tool to help them learn about their new country and culture.

It is quite useful to understand individual television viewing motivations, but scholars have uncovered some different underlying dimensions to the larger set of motives. Finn and Gore (1988), for example, found it useful to characterize television viewing motives as serving either *social compensation* or *mood management* needs. Social compensation refers to using television as a substitute for social interaction. The researchers argued that habit, passing time, companionship, and escapist motives reflect the use of television as a way to deal with deficiencies in one's social environment. Mood management refers to using television to regulate mood and physiological arousal. Relaxation, arousal, entertainment, and information motives reflect the use of television to increase or reduce environmental stimuli.

Rubin's (1984) analysis of television viewing motives, levels of television exposure, and program selection has led to a distinction between *instrumental* and *ritualistic* television viewing. Instrumental television viewing is watching television to gain information. It is associated with watching television news and information programs, but not very high television viewing levels. In general, consistent with their motives to learn, instrumental viewers plan what they watch and pay attention to the programs. Ritualistic television use, on the other hand, grows out of watching television out of habit, to pass time, and for entertainment. It is associated with high levels of television use and watching a range of different noninformational programs. Consistent with the habit and pastime motives, ritualistic viewers do not plan what they are going to watch and don't pay a lot of attention to the programs.

IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATIONS FOR TELEVISION VIEWING

It is important to identify and understand television viewing motives for two major reasons. First, there is evidence that viewing motives have an impact on the effects of media content. Knowing why someone is watching can help explain how they will be affected by what they are watching. Research has shown that news viewers are more likely to learn from the news if they are watching for informational reasons than if they are

watching for entertainment. If they watch for entertainment reasons, however, they are more likely to form parasocial relationships (or a sense of personal connections) with the new personalities. Social reality effects, such as agenda setting and cultivation, for example, also differ based on people's reasons for watching television.

A second reason to understand viewing motives is that teaching children to be aware of their own reasons for watching television is part of media literacy training. Children need to develop receivership skills, including an understanding of why they are watching television. Teaching children to consider their own motives can help them think about selecting programs that will satisfy their motives, consider other ways to satisfy those motives without television, and evaluate whether their choices have gratified their motives. Children should also be instructed how to match their motives and their program choices. For example, children who are motivated to learn about nutrition should be helped to select appropriate instructional media rather than learn from entertainment programs or commercial messages. An instructional focus on awareness of viewing motives should make children more critical consumers of television and mitigate possible negative media effects.

—Elizabeth M. Perse

See also Agenda Setting; Cultivation Theory; Media Effects; Media Effects, Models of; Uses and Gratifications Theory

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TELEVISION, OCCUPATIONAL PORTRAYALS ON

Television is an important source of information about occupations for children. Children learn about jobs not only from interacting with people in various occupations but also from the portrayals of the occupations they see in the media. Television's portrayal of occupations, however, is governed by dramatic rather than educational considerations. Only those jobs that serve a dramatic or useful function in a story or are part of a program's action are regularly portrayed on prime time. The work of law enforcement officers, doctors, and lawyers is often more exciting, suspenseful, interesting, and prestigious than that of farmers and laborers. Consequently, television consistently overrepresents these types of occupations while it underrepresents blue-collar occupations.

Children often want to emulate television characters who are shown working in glamorous jobs that pay well, yet are not too demanding. In a cultivation theory study using data from the Monitoring the Future Survey, Nancy Signorielli (1993) found that

those high school seniors who watched more television wanted to have glamorous and exciting jobs that would pay them handsomely. At the same time, these same students did not want to work very hard, and they sought jobs with lots of built-in vacation time. In short, these high school seniors reported visions of their future employment that mirrored the way occupations and work are presented in broadcast, network, prime-time television programs.

A consistent finding is that the television world of work is dominated by male characters and that fewer women than men can be categorized by occupation. In prime-time programs of the 1990s, Nancy Signorielli and Aaron Bacue (1999) found that 4 out of 10 female characters either did not work or were in an unspecified occupation. By comparison, fewer than one quarter of the male characters could not be classified in an occupation or were portrayed as not working.

Early content analyses consistently found that occupational role portrayals were stereotyped in terms of who was cast in the roles. Male characters were frequently found in various high-status professional or law enforcement jobs. Their female counterparts, on the other hand, were found in a narrower range of occupations often perceived as less prestigious, glamorous, and interesting—roles such as secretaries, nurses, teachers, and household workers.

More recent content analyses have found more equal representations of men and women in occupations. For example, David Atkin (1991), in an analysis of television series broadcast between 1966 and 1990, found more single women in professional and managerial positions and fewer in secretarial jobs. In the early 1990s, on broadcast prime-time television, about one fourth of the women were in professional and white-collar jobs (including entertainment) and one fifth in blue-collar positions. Yet, at the same time, women are still cast in roles as homemakers, home care workers, and unskilled laborers to a greater degree. Men, on the other hand, are typically portrayed as professionals and managers or in jobs relating to police work.

Content studies of programs seen in the 1970s found that race was an important predictor of employment and occupation. Minority characters were less likely than whites to have an identifiable job. Regardless of gender, white characters were more likely than minority characters to be portrayed as working outside the home. In addition, white male characters were more likely than female and minority characters to be portrayed as professionals and white-collar workers. Minorities, on the other hand, are seen in less prestigious, blue-collar jobs with many in service occupations. Moreover, male characters, regardless of race, are most frequently portrayed in police and criminal roles. Minorities, regardless of gender, were most frequently cast in service or clerical positions.

An analysis of prime-time programs in the 1990s continued to show differences in occupational portrayals by race as well as gender. Nancy Signorielli and Susan Kahlenberg (2001) found that more white than minority characters were characterized as working and that the labor force depicted in TV programming does not provide an accurate representation of the U.S. labor force. This study found that television overrepresents professionals in every category—men, women, whites, and people of color. On the other hand, white-collar (managerial, clerical) and blue-collar (service, labor) workers are distinctly underrepresented when compared with their numbers in the U.S. labor force. In fact, white-collar workers, especially men of color, are relatively scarce on television.

Blue-collar jobs are equally underrepresented, especially among characters of color. Except for law enforcement, most blue-collar jobs are more mundane, less glamorous and interesting, and, as a result, deficient in their storytelling potential. Law enforcement jobs, however, are some of the most overrepresented on television. Unlike actual police, most officers on television spend their days catching and arresting dangerous criminals, breaking down doors, and engaging in high-speed car chases with suspects. Consequently, these jobs are transformed to have good storytelling material, and they have become fundamental to the story lines of action-adventure, crime, and dramatic programs, some of the staples of prime time.

Nancy Signorielli (2005) conducted a study of prime-time occupational portrayals from the late 1990s into the first few years of the 21st century. Women, particularly black women in programs with mostly minority characters, have the least diversity and prestige in terms of the jobs in which they are cast. Similarly, white women in programs with all white characters are the least diverse in terms of jobs. Men's occupations, on the other hand, are equally diverse in most types of programs; the exception is the lack of law enforcement-related jobs in programs with mostly minority characters (which often are situation comedies and so do not typically lend themselves to law enforcement jobs).

Overall, television's network prime-time programs continue to present a rather narrow and limited view

of occupations. Exciting and glamorous occupations continue to dominate, whereas everyday jobs are rarely seen. Interestingly, the distribution of jobs for women and people of color has improved. Female characters in the 21st century are not automatically relegated to traditionally female jobs although they are still depicted as employed less often than male characters. Similarly, men and women of color are more likely to be seen as having an occupation, particularly in programs, often situation comedies, with mostly minority characters.

—Nancy Signorielli

See also Cultivation Theory; Gender Roles on Television

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TELEVISION, PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND

Television can have a variety of effects on the social behavior of its viewers depending on the content of the programming, characteristics of the viewer, and the context of the viewing environment. Although much attention has been focused on the effects of violent or antisocial content, many have noted the positive benefits of viewing programs designed to teach positive life lessons. Prosocial lessons are those that are designed to enhance children and adolescents' social, emotional, and moral development. Research indicates that children can just as effectively learn prosocial behavior from prosocial content as they do antisocial behavior from antisocial content. Various factors influence the degree to which prosocial content on television influences children's social behavior. Effects are strongest when the behavior that is modeled is salient, clearly portrayed, and can be easily incorporated into a child's everyday interactions. Furthermore, adults and teachers who use materials to extend children's learning can maximize the positive benefits of viewing television designed to teach children important social lessons.

Marie-Louise Mares and Emory Woodard systematically examined 34 studies that focused on the effects of prosocial acts on television on children and adolescents' social behavior. Mares and Woodard focused on four categories of prosocial behavior that have been studied most extensively: altruism, positive interaction, self-control, and antistereotyping.

ALTRUISM

Studies of altruism often include programs that focus on sharing, donating, and comforting others in times of need. Mares and Woodard found that compared to other forms of prosocial content, portrayals of altruism appear to have the strongest effects on children's behavior. One reason is that the studies are set up as controlled laboratory experiments that ask children to explicitly transfer behavior from the screen to the lab. Studies of altruism typically find that when children view portrayals of a model acting generously (e.g., donating prize tokens to charity), they are more likely to donate tokens that are given to them to charity compared to children who watch a model behave selfishly (e.g., cashing in winnings for a big prize) or in a neutral manner.

POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

Several studies of positive interactions (e.g., friendly play, conflict resolution) have been conducted in naturalistic settings. For example, Lynette Friedrich and Aletha Huston-Stein found that children who had viewed *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* exhibited more

friendly behavior in the school playground compared to those who viewed neutral content. Studies of *Barney and Friends* indicate that children learn about cooperation and friendship through viewing the show.

SELF-CONTROL AND PERSISTENCE

Studies of self-control include programs that focus on resistance to temptation, obedience to rules, and persistence at a task. The self-control studies are often set up as lab experiments similar to the studies on altruism. Many studies conducted in the 1970s indicated that children who view models who are able to resist temptation (e.g., resisting playing with a forbidden toy, eating forbidden food) are more likely to demonstrate self-control compared to children who view models who indulge in forbidden activities. In a more recent study, children who viewed 20 episodes of *Dragon Tales,* a show designed to encourage children to pursue challenges, more frequently chose to pursue challenging tasks, compared to those who were not exposed to the series.

REDUCTION OF STEREOTYPES

Finally, studies that fell into the antistereotyping category included studies on acceptance and celebration of cultures. Early evaluations of *Sesame Street* found that Caucasian preschoolers had more positive attitudes toward African Americans and Latino Americans after viewing *Sesame Street* over the course of the 2-year study. A more recent study of the Israeli-Palestinian production of *Sesame Street* showed that viewing led to an increase in prosocial problem solving and more positive attitudes toward children of the other group.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONTENT

Children are more likely to learn from prosocial messages when the portrayals can be transferred to children's own lives. For example, researchers at Sesame Workshop found that children learned more prosocial behaviors from content that likely occurred often in a preschool setting (e.g., including other children in games) than content that is likely to occur less frequently (e.g., comforting in times of loss). Furthermore, children tend to behave in more prosocial ways when they view content based on reality compared to a fictional story.

There is some evidence that when prosocial behavior is combined with violent or antisocial behavior within a particular lesson, the message backfires. Linda Silverman found that 3-year-old children became less cooperative after watching *Sesame Street* segments that contained conflict followed by resolution of the conflict. Marsha Liss and Lauri Reinhardt found that the combination of prosocial and antisocial acts in the cartoon series, *Superfriends*, led to more aggressive behavior than either antisocial or prosocial depictions alone.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VIEWER

Demographic factors might influence how children are affected by prosocial depictions. Whereas the effectiveness of prosocial depictions seems not to vary by gender or race or ethnicity according to Mares and Woodard, there is some evidence that prosocial television had a stronger effect on children from middle- to upper-class homes compared to children from low-income families.

Age also seems to be an influential factor. The effect of prosocial content seems to increase between the ages of 3 and 7, peak at age 7, and then decline. There is some thought that until age 7 or so, children have not fully developed the cognition to incorporate content from television and understand how to transfer such behavioral patterns to their own lives.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONTEXT

Children who view programs with an adult coviewer gain more from the educational experience of viewing than children who view alone. Furthermore, supplementary materials in classroom settings also seem to influence effects. For example, in a study of *Freestyle,* Jerome Johnston and James Ettema found the strongest effects in an experimental condition that included viewing plus extra classroom activities compared to viewing at home alone. Similarly, the effectiveness of *Barney and Friends* in teaching manners was enhanced by teacher-led discussion and activities.

COMPARISON TO THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE

Susan Hearold reviewed 230 studies on television and social behavior that were published prior to 1978. She concluded that prosocial effects were stronger and

more enduring than antisocial effects, both in the laboratory and in more natural conditions. Mares and Woodard's more recent analysis of prosocial effects could be compared to Haejung Paik and George Comstock's analysis of violent or aggressive television. These two more recent meta-analyses found equal effect sizes for the two types of content.

—Jennifer A. Kotler

See also Advertising Campaigns, Prosocial; Cognitive Development, Media and; Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Effects; Television, Prosocial Content and

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TELEVISION, PROSOCIAL CONTENT AND

While numerous studies document the vast number of violent acts on television, less attention has been focused on television that teaches positive social lessons. Nevertheless, there is evidence that children can learn many positive life lessons from viewing programs intended to teach. The important life lessons can vary from the intrapersonal to the interpersonal but are often categorized as *prosocial* because they are designed to enhance children's and adolescents' social, emotional, and moral development. Several studies have examined the prevalence and kinds of prosocial acts that have been found in children's, family, and general audience programming. Most of these studies were conducted in the early 1970s and 1980s. Many televised programs as well as commercials contain prosocial behavior.

Interpersonal kinds of content that have been examined are positive interactions, altruism, and reduction of stereotypes. Content analyses conducted by Bradley Greenberg and colleagues found that altruistic acts such as sharing and helping were the most common prosocial acts and occurred about 14 times per television hour in Saturday morning and prime-time programming. Similarly, Liebert and Poulous (1975) found 11 altruistic acts and 6 sympathetic behaviors per hour of television. Reduction of stereotypes or at least gender equality among male and female characters has also been found in several studies. For example, a study of *Teletubbies* and *Barney & Friends* found that both male and female characters hug, show affection, play together, and take turns.

The intrapersonal kinds of content that have been examined are such attributes as self-esteem, self-control, and delay of gratification. Liebert and Poulous found that instances of self-control or delay of gratification occurred less than once per hour. Whereas programs such as *Dragon Tales* contain messages to children about task persistence, overall, most programs with prosocial themes tend to focus on interpersonal skills.

TELEVISION POLICY AND PROSOCIAL CONTENT

The Children's Television Act requires that stations air at least 3 hours of educational television. Many stations are meeting that requirement by airing programs considered to contribute to children's social development. Kelly Schmitt found that 75% of shows designated as educational were indeed prosocial in nature. Most of the prosocial lessons were found in preschool programs, about three quarters of which contained a social lesson.

When children watch such educational television, they are exposed to largely prosocial skills, rather than academic or cognitive types of skills. Furthermore, when children were asked to describe what the educational programs were about, the vast majority discussed prosocial themes. In talking about prosocial shows, children were clearer and showed greater engagement than when they talked about more academic and cognitive programs. Amy Jordan notes that the greater recall of prosocial content could be due to the fact that children already knew such content whereas academic lessons might be new and thus more difficult to articulate.

OTHER PROGRAMMING

Researchers suggest that it is important to assess other types of programming that children view, not just shows specifically made for them, given that children and adolescents spend much of their time with other types of programming. Content analyses of family sitcoms shown during the 1980s found that communication between family members tended to be positive rather than negative or conflict based. Similarly, George Comstock and Krystyna Strzyewski analyzed prime-time television programming during the 1987–1988 season and found that characters typically resolved interpersonal problems in constructive (e.g., discussion) rather than destructive ways.

FAVORITE PROGRAMMING

Greenberg and colleagues analyzed the favorite programs of a sample of fourth, sixth, and eighth graders. They found that these programs contained an average of 44.2 acts of prosocial behavior in an average hour. The prosocial behavior included displays of altruism and empathy and discussion of feelings. The researchers also found that the violence was just as frequent, however.

A recent study conducted by Deborah Weber and Dorothy Singer analyzed the favorite programs and videos viewed by children age 2 and under. They found many occurrences of prosocial behavior, including sharing, helping, and manners. For example, in the video *Sesame Street: Learning to Share,* there were 45 instances of positive social behaviors.

COMMERCIALS

Commercials also contain examples of prosocial behavior. In one study, prosocial behavior appeared in 59% of all children's commercials. Friendly behaviors were the most common forms of prosocial behavior, with 42% of all commercials containing examples of affection between characters. Helping and teaching were common altruistic behaviors, appearing in 21% of all commercials. Mary Strom Larson analyzed 595 commercials in children's programming and found that commercials depicting only girls showed almost all cooperative interactions (i.e., 85% of the time). Mixed boy and girl commercials primarily portrayed cooperative interactions (51%), compared to boys-only commercials, which contained primarily competitive interactions.

—Jennifer A. Kotler

See also Cognitive Development, Media and; Media Effects; Television, Prosocial Behavior and

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TELEVISION, VIEWER AGE AND

Age is generally regarded as one of the most fundamental structuring factors with regard to the television audience. However, it should be noted that age in itself is not an explanatory variable but rather a convenient indicator of various kinds of development that are normal in human beings as they pass through the life span. These include biological-sexual development, cognitive development, and social development.

Any discussion of the relationship between young children and TV use should include an understanding of cognitive development (i.e., the ways in which we learn to think and process information). During the course of cognitive development, children become less dependent on immediate perception, and their

ability to deal with multiple dimensions expands, providing them with greater means and resources for using the media. Consequently, levels of TV viewing tend to increase throughout childhood, although there are significant variations according to factors such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. There is also evidence that because they tend to be hungrier for all kinds of information, up until the age of about 9 or 10 years, those children who are cognitively more developed watch more TV than their less-developed peers. However, they also tend to start losing interest in TV earlier as it no longer provides them with adequate cognitive or informational gratifications.

Studies differ with regard to the exact moment at which mean levels of TV viewing peak in childhood, some reporting it as early as 9 and others at 11 years of age or even later. Moreover, there is evidence that the arrival of music television channels has increased the age at which the peak occurs, although, more recently, this has been at least partly offset by the growth in popularity of computer game playing (especially among boys) and online chatting (especially among girls). What is certain is that between 9 and 13 years old, children experience a radical shift in program preferences as they become more selective and their tastes more differentiated. The result is a move away from more child-oriented to more adult-oriented patterns, accompanied by a move away from conventional TV channels to more specialized ones. Thus, genres such as action-based programs, films, and music (indeed, anything that provides a window on the world in general and adult life in particular) increase in popularity at the expense of children's programs and cartoons. However, program preferences remain heavily structured by gender so that, at this age, it is not too much to claim that boys and girls inhabit different media worlds.

With the onset of puberty, biological-sexual and social development become of central importance for television use. The striving for independence lessens orientations to the family, and as more and more time is spent outside the home, the importance of the peer group increases. Concomitantly, levels of TV viewing tend to fall significantly as other forms of media—above all, music, but also, more recently, the Internet—come to better fulfill the sets of needs and motives of individuals and the groups to which they belong. However, because females enter puberty on average 2 years earlier than males, it is once again essential to control for gender when analyzing these processes. Ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and even nutritional factors (height and weight gain are excellent indicators of the timing of puberty) also affect the timing and rate of pubertal development.

During adolescence, with the exception of music television, mean levels of TV viewing continue to fall, with the result that older adolescents and young adults manifest very low mean levels of TV use (indeed, they are low users of most media). With the advent of early adulthood, television use is increasingly affected most by life stage and social context factors. As the process of founding one's own household, living with a partner, and perhaps starting a family unfolds, more time tends to be spent at home. As a result, levels of TV viewing increase, steadily rising to a new life-stage peak in later life.

Building on the early work of Brown, Cramond, and Wilde (1974), Rosengren and Windahl (1989) proposed a theoretical model for the relationship between human development and media use termed a *uses and development model,* which they combined with uses and gratifications theory. According to this perspective, certain developmental events and processes (cognitive, social, sexual-biological, or a combination of all three) create different sorts of resources (biological, cognitive, mental, or material) as well as various needs and requirements, including attitudes, interests, values, and tastes. These make possible and bring about certain types of media use, and these in turn bring about certain media effects and consequences.

In short, the model postulates that the need structure of the individual changes continuously as he or she passes through different developmental stages. Thus, for example, with age, certain motives will gain importance as others lose. The preschooler does not approach the screen for the same reasons as does a 10-year-old, and neither does so for the same reasons as a 15-year-old; nor do boys always approach the screen for quite the same reasons as girls. Consequently, when discussing the relationship between age, development, and television use among children and adolescents, it is essential to avoid generalizations by always carefully specifying the age, gender, and other social characteristics of the group in question.

—Keith Roe

See also Adolescents, Developmental Needs of, and Media; Cognitive Skills, Computer Use and; Developmental Differences, Media and

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TELEVISION RATING SYSTEMS

As part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Congress gave television industry representatives a year to develop a system to rate television programming. Establishing a ratings system was necessary to make the V-chip (violence chip) provision of the 1996 act possible. The rating assigned to each episode is transmitted electronically along with the program, allowing parents to use the V-chip to block shows they don't want their children to view. If the broadcast industry had failed to produce a workable rating system after a year, Congress left open the possibility of an outside body developing a way to rate programming.

The television rating system, developed by the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Cable Television Association, and the Motion Picture Association of America, is referred to as the *TV Parental Guidelines.* In addition to transmitting ratings electronically to enable V-chip operation, the ratings are provided in TV listings and are flashed on the screen for the first 15 minutes of each program. Broadcast and cable networks began applying the rating system in 1997.

There are two components to the program ratings. The first provides an age-based recommendation as to the appropriateness of each episode of a TV show. It is comparable to the motion picture rating system. The second part of an episode's rating provides labels to indicate specific content parents might find to be objectionable.

Six age designations are used. They include TV-Y, programs suitable for all children; TV-Y7, for children 7 years and older because at this age, children are more likely to be able to distinguish between reality and make-believe; TV-G, programs suitable for a general audience although not specifically tailored to children; TV-PG, when parental coviewing is advisable for younger children; TV-14, unsuitable for preteen and younger audiences; and TV-MA, programming solely for an adult audience. Very few programs are assigned this last rating.

The age-based rating system was the only component of the TV content ratings when it was initially implemented. Quickly, however, there was concern that these ratings did not provide sufficient information for parents to make informed decisions about their children's viewing choices. Within a year, content categories were added to the age-based labels. The content categories are V (violence), S (sexual situations), L (coarse or crude language), D (suggestive dialogue, usually sexual), and FV (fantasy violence). The content categories are used as an addition to the age-based designations.

To avoid First Amendment challenges likely to accompany direct government involvement in program content, the ratings are assigned either by the program producers who create the TV shows or by the networks that air them. Each episode is rated independently, so a particular television program's rating can vary from week to week. News programming and sportscasts are not rated, but all other types of programming are. Although the ratings system is officially voluntary, all of the broadcast networks rate their programming, as do the vast majority of cable channels.

Proponents argue that the rating system, in combination with the V-chip, gives parents a useful tool to protect children from content the parents decide is inappropriate. But critics challenge the effectiveness of the ratings system and V-chip. The operation of the V-chip requires parents to overcome several technological hurdles. In addition, the usefulness of the system is constrained by the limitations of the ratings themselves.

One concern is that programmers purposefully assign less "mature" ratings to programs to avoid scaring potential advertisers. On the other hand, observers have noted that producers may actually produce programming with higher levels of sex and violence because they can simply rate the programming and leave parents with the responsibility to make sure those shows are screened out. Along the same lines, critics argue that flashing the ratings on the TV screen at the beginning of each program may attract some children to programs containing inappropriate content.

The exclusion of news and sports programming from the ratings system also limits the extent to which parents can dependably block programming with objectionable elements. Although the nature of these programs is such that ratings aren't practical, news programs and sporting events can contain high levels of violence and other objectionable content. Even parents who set the V-chip to block everything but the mildest programs would not have been able to keep out of their homes the now-infamous Super Bowl halftime show where Janet Jackson's wardrobe "malfunctioned" and exposed her nipple.

Given that program producers and networks assign their own ratings, the consistency of how each category is applied also comes into question. For example, does TV-PG reliably mean the same thing on NBC as it does on TBS? Does TV-PG even reliably mean the same thing on different programs airing on the same network? Content analysis of programming has shown the age-based ratings are used fairly consistently to distinguish the appropriateness of specific programs. The content descriptors, however, are much less dependable. In many instances, content descriptors aren't even being used to indicate the presence of violence, sex, or adult language. Even in children's programming, the FV (fantasy violence) indicator is often omitted.

Parents who disagree with ratings assigned to a particular program can appeal to the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board. The board has 24 members, 6 each from the broadcast industry, the cable industry, and the creative community (writers, actors, etc.); 5 from child advocacy, medical, religious, or educational organizations; and the chair, who is the current president of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

—Jennifer L. Lambe

See also Adult Mediation Strategies; First Amendment; Forbidden Fruit Hypothesis; Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); Parental Advisory Labels and Rating Systems; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; Regulation, Television; Telecommunications Act of 1996; V-Chip (Violence Chip)

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TELEVISION RATING SYSTEMS, PARENTAL USES OF

In January 1997, the nation's telecasters introduced a television program rating system in the United States. Under considerable congressional pressure, the industry volunteered to provide onscreen information as to the suitability of programs for different age groups. Two ratings categories were adopted for children's programs (one for all children and one for children 7 and above), and four categories were created for nonchildren (TV-G for general audiences, TV-PG where parental guidance was recommended, TV-14 for shows intended for viewers 14 and older, and TV-MA for mature audiences). In October 1997, under further pressure, the rating system added content labels for sex, violence, suggestive dialogue, and adult language. Television networks have no common standard for assigning ratings to television programs. Each network or production unit creates and applies its own definitions.

A series of national surveys of parents of 2-to-17-year-olds by the Kaiser Family Foundation, taken in 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2004, provide the most comprehensive description of public acceptance and use of the TV ratings. One year into the ratings, 57% of the national sample of parents said they had not seen or read anything that explained the ratings and what they meant, although four fifths had heard of them. More telling, 18% of the parents had never heard anything about such ratings, and 27% who were aware of them reported that they never or hardly ever used them. These parents also exaggerated their understanding of the system. The study indicates that among parents who say they understand the ratings *very well,* only one fourth are actually well informed when tested as to the symbols' meanings. One year later, half of the parents still did not use the TV ratings

information, although more than 80% said they used the movie ratings.

In its 2001 survey, the Kaiser Family Foundation reported parental use still at near the halfway mark (56%), but that figure was much higher than the 7% of parents who used the V-chip in their TV monitor. Half of the parents surveyed said they used the parental advisories on CDs and music tapes, and 59% used the information on video games. In this study, 3 years after the ratings system was initiated, two thirds could not spontaneously name a specific TV rating, 69% could not correctly indicate what TV-Y meant, 53% could not explain TV-MA, 95% could not explain the content label D, and only 52% could correctly state that S stood for sexual content. Furthermore, half the parents sampled did not agree that the ratings accurately reflected the shows' content.

Findings in its 2004 survey do not alter these earlier findings substantially: Even among parents who have used the ratings, 60% believe they are not accurate *some* or *most* of the time.

This latter issue of relative accuracy was addressed by Kunkel and his colleagues in a 2001 study. They systematically examined 1,147 TV programs for "high-risk" violent and sexual behaviors, for example, extensive, serious, explicit violence or intercourse, sexual assault, and explicit nudity. About 10% of the shows the researchers looked at qualified as high-risk violent and 4% as high-risk sexual. Only one fourth of the high-risk violent shows contained a rating as strong as TV-14. There was no V label on fully 65% of the general audience programs that the research scheme identified as containing violent-risk content. In the subset of children's programming, more than two thirds of all high-risk violent shows carried a TV-Y label—suitable for children of all ages. Half of the high-risk sexual shows had a TV-14 rating, but 80% of these shows contained no S designation. The research findings argued for the lack of symmetry between the TV ratings provided by the industry and the actual program content.

In a 2001 study, Greenberg, Eastin, and Mastro found that for parents who wished to know the ratings in advance of looking at the onscreen information, such publications as *TV Guide* did not provide age-based ratings for 27% of program listings, and content information was present for only one fourth of those shows with age-based ratings. In a follow-up study, they compared published show ratings with what actually appeared in a videotaped sample of shows. Nearly one in five shows (18%) were rated both in print and onscreen but had different ratings, typically with a more youth-oriented rating in the published print version than in what was seen during the show's airing.

Abelman (2001) profiled parents more or less likely to use the television ratings and found that the most likely users were those parents least likely in need of mediation assistance. These are parents who work together in creating rules about TV, use reasoning and explanation, appeal to the child's pride, and have children who are low to moderate TV watchers and high academic achievers. Parents least likely to be using the ratings do not work together with their children and offer little supervision or discipline other than unfocused coviewing; their children are the heaviest TV watchers. Furthermore, these parents do not believe that TV has significant positive or negative effects. Between these two groups are parents who use more restrictive forms of TV mediation (e.g., program banning, time constraints) with children who are moderate to high TV consumers. These parents are most concerned with the behavioral impact of TV.

Hofschire (2001) summarized experimental research on ratings to determine the relative merits of two propositions: that such information would increase the likelihood of choosing less acceptable shows (forbidden fruit) or would decrease such choices (tainted fruit). Although citing some support for both, she concludes that participants preferred media content that had advisories or more restrictive ratings.

—Bradley S. Greenberg

See also Adult Mediation Strategies; Forbidden Fruit Hypothesis; Parental Advisory Labels and Rating Systems; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Rating Systems, Parental Use of; Television Rating Systems; V-Chip (Violence Chip)

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TELEVISION VIOLENCE

The phenomenon of television violence has received much attention and debate. Its definition, implications, and rationale have been questioned and studied by policymakers, media scholars, and practitioners. Television violence has remained at the center of debates over television policy, particularly in reference to children and children's programming.

The difficulty in defining television violence lies in the breadth of the definition. Some consider violence to include only physically violent actions. Such a definition is easily quantifiable but overlooks other actions and behavior with potentially powerful consequences. Verbal threats and the implication of physical violence are important, particularly in terms of violence portrayed on television, where the violent act may not be actually depicted. It is also important to consider the possibility of psychological violence, such as verbal abuse and degradation.

Television violence is, therefore, defined as the transmission of violence, broadly defined, through the medium of television. In 1998, the National Television Violence Study (NTVS), a multiyear attempt to quantify the presence of violence on cable television, defined television violence as falling into any of three categories: credible threats, behavioral acts, and harmful consequences. This definition encompasses physical acts as well as the possibility of verbal and implied violence. Visual cues such as scars, bandages, blood, or hospitals can denote violence without actually showing it.

Public concern over television violence stems from the portrayal of both fiction and nonfiction. Nonfiction televised material and journalism tend to depict actual violent events such as wars, insurgency, and civil disputes. Television journalists covering war now have the capacity to report from the war zone, enabling the presentation of gun-fighting, people being killed or maimed, and the aftermath of such violence. Televised nonfictional violence can also be seen in *Cops*-style reality dramas, in which real people are dramatically portrayed in their interactions with law enforcement. Critics of nonfiction violence suggest that presentations are exaggerated and sensationalistic. Reality-based entertainment programs are open to such criticism; however, journalists argue that their work merely represents events in the real world.

Televised portrayals of fictional violence cannot as easily claim to represent reality. Instead, fictional accounts tell stories and dramatize events. Fictionalized violence is often less realistic than real violence. Cartoons and prime-time dramas alike employ unrealistic and inconsistent violence in their programs. For instance, some characters are blown back 10 feet by gunshots whereas others get up and continue fighting after having been shot multiple times. In addition to this, fictional characters using violence are sometimes portrayed in unrealistic or antisocial ways. For instance, heroic protagonists are often rewarded for using violence against their enemies.

The NTVS states that violence on television has been linked repeatedly with antisocial and aggressive behavior (NTVS, p. 5). Their conclusion is substantiated with findings such as:

- Nearly 40% of the violent incidents on television are initiated by characters who possess qualities that make them attractive role models.
- Fully 71% of violent scenes contain no remorse, criticism, or penalty for violence at the time that it occurs.
- Less than 20% of the violent programs portray the long-term damage of violence to the victim's family, friends, and community.

- At least 40% of the violent scenes on television include humor.
- Less than 5% of violent programs feature an antiviolence message. (NTVS, p. 26)

The significance of television violence for American youth lies in its implications, based principally on two factors. First, television usage is nearly ubiquitous among children in the United States today. Nearly all American children live in households with televisions, and the average child watches between 3 and 4 hours of television each day. Second, television as a medium is thought to influence through its portrayals. Children are thought to be more profoundly affected by televised violence than the general population. Scholars cite children's lesser ability to distinguish between reality and fiction, lack of understanding of consequences, and inexperience in the world as particularly meaningful. Children may adopt unsuitable role models and develop inappropriate problem-solving and conflict resolution practices as a result of their viewing violence and its glorification on television.

Wilson and colleagues found that these problematic consequences are exacerbated in children's programming, which research finds to be more violent than programming for adults. For instance, Woo and Kim note that professional wrestling, for which children and teens make up a significant portion of the audience, portrays violent and antisocial behavior both within and outside of actual match time. Inside the ring, wrestlers are practicing sport; however, their outside-the-ring behavior can suggest that disputes are appropriately resolved with violent fighting. In addition, televised wrestling makes heroes out of those wrestlers whose behavior is most antisocial. In a different study, Wilson et al. found that violent content is more likely to be featured in children's programming than in any other type of program.

It is generally believed that violence is prevalent on television because it is profitable for broadcasting companies. Violence, sex, and humor, are among the most powerful attention-grabbing tools available to broadcasters. Programming, therefore, favors violence, sex, and humor to acquire as large a share of the audience as possible.

Public concern over television violence has contributed to formal and informal remedies. Formally, the Federal Communications Commission has established numerous statutes to mediate between broadcasters' First Amendment rights and public concern. For instance, television programs are now required to display ratings similar to those required by the Motion Picture Association of America to determine the age-appropriateness of content. In addition, parents are being empowered to play a larger role in their children's television viewing, supervising what is being watched and parenting in appropriate ways that offset the potential negative consequences of television violence.

—Mark Finney

See also Cartoons, Violence in; News, Children's Exposure to; News, Children's Responses to; Television Violence, Susceptibility to; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Extent of and Responses to

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TELEVISION VIOLENCE, SUSCEPTIBILITY TO

Within the field of communication, television violence is perhaps one of the most frequently and exhaustively

researched topic, and for good reason. Several content analyses, particularly those conducted by George Gerbner and colleagues (beginning in 1967) and the National Television Violence Study indicate that violent images are pervasive on television and that children's television tends to be especially violent. In fact, one study by George Gerbner, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli found that children's programming, dominated by cartoons, featured an average of 20 violent acts per hour. A more recent study by Dale Kunkel and colleagues found that 6 out of 10 shows designed for children feature aggression, with more than five violent scenes per show. As noted by Barbara Wilson and colleagues, it is surprising that programs targeting children 12 and younger feature more violence than other types of programming do.

Violence is quite prevalent on television programs targeting young people, and we also know that young people spend a significant portion of their lives with television. Research conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation indicates that young people ages 8 to 18 spend an average of 3 hours a day watching television. Taking these research findings into consideration, researcher Alethea Huston and colleagues have estimated that by the time a child graduates from elementary school, he or she will have witnessed more than 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 other acts of violence on network television. Indeed, this figure is even higher if the child has access to cable television, DVDs, videocassettes, and video games.

Fortunately, researchers have contributed much knowledge to our understanding of television violence and its effects on young people (and adults) by conducting a wide range of research, including experiments, surveys, field research, and longitudinal analyses. When examined as a whole using meta-analytic methods, the existing research on television violence points rather convincingly to three potential outcomes: (1) learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors, (2) becoming desensitized, and (3) developing fear. However, the body of research in this area also reveals that not everyone is affected by television violence in the same way; that is, certain young people are more susceptible to violent content than others. In fact, a viewer's susceptibility to television violence is influenced by a range of factors, including viewer demographics, viewer traits and states, and contextual characteristics of the televised violent portrayals.

WHO IS MOST SUSCEPTIBLE?

Although all viewers, young and old, are vulnerable to television violence, research has indicated that some children and adolescents are more susceptible than others. Over the years, researchers have pointed to several factors (often referred to as "individual differences") that heighten a young person's susceptibility to the effects of television violence.

Age

Researchers investigating television violence have historically positioned young children as a unique audience, regarding this group as highly susceptible to the negative effects of viewing violence. This heightened level of susceptibility is often attributed to children's lower stage of cognitive development. There are many specific reasons why television typically has a larger effect on young children. For example, young children are more likely to identify with and imitate aggressive television characters than are older children and adults. The degree to which children perceive a violent portrayal as realistic and identify with aggressive characters has also been found to heighten their susceptibility to violent portrayals. In addition, because children younger than 8 years old cannot discriminate between fantasy and reality, they are vulnerable to learning and adopting as reality the attitudes and behaviors portrayed in television. Moreover, young children have trouble following story plots, so they are apt to be drawn to high-action programming (which often means violent programming) without considering the motivations or consequences of violence on the screen. In fact, in their analysis of the existing studies on the effects of television analysis, Haejung Paik and George Comstock found an inverse relationship between the age of the viewer and the magnitude of the effect of television violence on aggression; that is, as age increased, effects decreased. Clearly, young children appear to be especially susceptible to television violence.

Gender

Early studies on the effects of television violence have indicated that boys are far more vulnerable than girls. In fact, as noted by Paik and Comstock's analysis of surveys and experimental studies, television

violence tends to have a stronger effect on males than females. This finding is partly due to the fact that boys tend to pay more attention to violence. One study by S. B. Levine suggests that boys seem more drawn to violent shows and are more agitated by them, where as girls tend to be repelled by them and saddened. However, in recent years, research has suggested that girls are increasingly susceptible to aggressive television portrayals; this is partly attributed to societal change and the increase in aggressive female characters on television. Clearly, more research is needed to shed greater light on gender and susceptibility to television violence.

Other Demographic Variables

Research has found that youth from minority groups and those from lower-class families watch more television and therefore are exposed to more televised violence. However, there is very little research to indicate that these groups are more or less affected by their viewing than others. In other words, within every social class and ethnic group, viewing television violence heightens the likelihood of behaving aggressively. More research is needed to help determine whether certain socioeconomic groups and ethnic groups are more vulnerable than others.

Intelligence

Many studies have indicated that children with lower intelligence levels watch more television in general and watch more violent television. Research has also suggested that children with low IQ are more likely to behave aggressively as grown-ups. However, as noted by researchers Brad Bushman and L. Rowell Huesmann, the relationship between television violence and aggressive behaviors is not simply the result of low-IQ youth watching more television violence and behaving more aggressively. Rather, research has indicated that television violence affects both high-IQ children and low-IQ children.

Aggressive Traits

Traits are used to describe a person's characteristic patterns of behaving, thinking, and feeling. Research has found that characteristically aggressive young people are more likely to be influenced in the short term by viewing violence than those without aggressive traits. For example, Brad Bushman and others have found that people who are naturally aggressive are more likely to have aggressive thoughts, feel angry, and behave aggressively immediately after watching violence on television. However, in contrast with the short-term effects found in experimental studies, longitudinal studies (those that examine people over a long period of time) have found that both low-aggression and high-aggression children are affected by television violence. In other words, characteristically aggressive young people may be more susceptible to violent television in the short term, however, all children, regardless of aggressive traits, are susceptible to violent television in the long term.

Aggressive States

Whereas *traits* are generally stable and long lasting, *states* are best understood as temporary and fluctuating. Research into the effects of television violence has found that when viewers are in a state of arousal, frustration, or anger, they are at greater risk of a negative effect. For example, research suggests that the effects are strongest on people who have been aroused or provoked just prior to exposure to violent television.

HIGH-RISK PORTRAYALS OF TELEVISED VIOLENCE

Characteristics of viewers play an important role in determining their susceptibility to violent messages on television. However, it is important to note that not all violent portrayals are equal; in fact, various types of violent messages pose more risk to viewers than others. The National Television Violence Study (NTVS) has contributed much to our understanding of violent portrayals that increase the risk of harmful effects on viewers, especially children. According to the NTVS researchers, a high-risk portrayal that poses the greatest risk of learning aggression features (1) a perpetrator who is attractive, (2) violence that seems justified, (3) violence that goes unpunished, (4) violence that results in minimal consequences to the victim, and/or (5) violence that seems realistic to the viewer. Characterizations in which the perpetrator of violence is attractive are especially problematic because viewers may identify with such a character, which may in turn increase the likelihood of a negative effect. Likewise, violent depictions that pose the

highest risk of desensitizing viewers to the seriousness of violence feature repeated exposure to graphic or extensive violence as well as humorous violence. Finally, violent depictions that are most likely to lead to fear among viewers are those that involve an attractive victim, appear realistic, are repeated, go unpunished, and seem unjustified. Although certain types of violent depictions are more likely to lead to certain types of effects, the NTVS researchers also note that some contextual features, such as showing the negative consequences of violence, can actually lower the likelihood of harmful outcomes.

RISK FACTORS AND MEDIATING FACTORS

An important overall finding from the research on susceptibility to television violence is that not all youths are affected equally or in the same way by viewing media violence. The risks associated with television violence depend not only on the nature of television audience, but also on the nature of the violent portrayals. Factors that appear to most influence the effects of television violence on viewer aggression include characteristics of the viewer (such as age, gender, aggressive traits, and aggressive states) and characteristics of the violent portrayal (including characteristics of perpetrators, degree of realism and justification for violence, and depiction of consequences of violence). Out of all these factors, the age of the viewer seems to pose the greatest risk of negative outcomes; that is, young children are especially susceptible to televised violence because of their limited ability to understand television. Evidence that other individual, environmental, and content factors enhance the negative effects of exposure to media violence is less clear. However, along with research on the many factors that heighten a young person's susceptibility to television violence, there is also a body of literature on the forces that help to counteract the harmful effects of television violence. Parental coviewing of television, reducing children's exposure to violent television, encouraging the entertainment industry to create more responsible portrayals of violence, and teaching young people critical viewing skills (i.e., media education) can help to make children less susceptible to the negative effects of television violence.

—*Angela Paradise*

See also Aggression, Television and; Cartoons, Violence in; Developmental Differences, Media and; Media Effects; Television Violence; Violence, Effects of

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THIRD-PERSON EFFECT

The third-person effect, originally proposed by W. Phillips Davison in 1983, consists of a perceptual component and a behavioral component. The perceptual component is the view that media messages have

a greater effect on others than on oneself. Davison speculated that this belief would have behavioral consequences; for example, it might make people more willing to monitor or regulate media content to protect vulnerable others. Most research on the third-person effect has been done with adults. A handful of studies have examined this phenomenon among children and adolescents, and two studies have explored parents' beliefs about the effects of television on their own and other children.

Support for the third-person perception has been found for many types of media content, including product and political advertising, rap music, pornography, and media violence. Results suggest that the third-person perception is strengthened when the media message is negative or when persuasion by the message is perceived as less socially desirable, but that it is reduced or reversed for positive media content (e.g., public service announcements), as long as audience members consider it desirable to be influenced by the message. In a study of parents' beliefs about television violence effects, third-person perceptions (that their own child would be less affected than others' children) were larger for socially undesirable aggression-related effects than for effects on perceptions of social reality. In another study, children judged themselves as less affected than other children by cigarette advertisements (a third-person perception) but saw themselves as more influenced by anti-smoking messages (a first-person perception).

One explanation for third-person perceptions, derived from attribution theory, is that people's judgments about their own and others' behavior is based on different sources of information (the fundamental attribution error), leading to biased perceptions. In an effort to explain the different patterns for negative and positive media content, scholars have suggested that self-enhancement may explain motivation. Third-person perceptions may be grounded in people's motivation to feel in control and maintain a positive self-image. Individuals can enhance their self-esteem by judging themselves as smarter, more knowledgeable, and more resistant to persuasion than others.

This tendency to see oneself as relatively unaffected by the media extends to one's close associates. Third-person perceptions are greater when the others being compared are described as more socially distant (students at the same school versus people in the same state). For example, children's third-person perceptions for cigarette ads were larger when the comparison others were children their age rather than their best friends. One explanation is that, when considering distant and unfamiliar others, people tend to generate a stereotyped image of someone likely to be more influenced by the media. Another explanation suggests that this pattern may reflect assumptions about media exposure. People may assume that more distant others are more likely to be exposed to harmful media content—for example, people in general watch more violent TV than the people in one's own neighborhood.

Group processes, such as those described by social identity theory, have also been proposed as an underlying mechanism. More distant others are likely to be seen as less similar and as more likely to belong to an out-group, that is, a social group different from one's own. People judged to be members of an out-group are evaluated less favorably—and as more influenced by the media—than members of one's in-group.

With regard to the behavioral component, studies have shown that the third-person perception is associated with a greater willingness to support restrictions on various forms of negative media, such as television violence and violent rap lyrics. A few studies have documented other behavioral consequences. For example, third-person perceptions of the effects of television are related to parental mediation of children's television viewing. Studies have also examined how third-person perceptions relate to young people's intentions to engage in behaviors such as smoking and safer-sex practices. In one study, the more likely youth were to smoke, based on stated intentions and exposure to a pro-smoking environment, the smaller their third-person perceptions for cigarette advertisements (self relative to other youth their age). This relationship may simply reflect accurate perceptions of media influence. Yet, youth who were more likely to smoke also thought their best friends were more affected by cigarette ads, raising the possibility that the perceived effects of media messages on peers may motivate young people to engage in popular behaviors to "fit in."

This interpretation is derived from a recent theoretical extension of the third-person effect, labeled "the influence of presumed influence." This model suggests that perceptions of media effects on others (rather than, or in addition to, the self–other difference) may offer a broader understanding of how beliefs about media effects may influence attitudes and behaviors. Young people may act in part on the

basis of how they think their peers, parents, or others are influenced by media messages such as advertisements, blogs, or media sexual portrayals.

—Cynthia A. Hoffner

See also Advertising, Persuasive Intent of; Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Peer Groups, Joint Use of Media in

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TOBACCO ADVERTISING, INTERNATIONAL

As with other types of consumer goods, tobacco companies use advertising and marketing strategies to promote their products. The first tobacco advertisements, dating from the 19th century, mainly describe pipe and chewing tobacco. In 1910, the manufacturing of cigarettes changed, and tobacco companies started intensive nationwide advertising campaigns for their new cigarette brands. In the early years (1880–1920), advertisements were mainly targeted toward men. During the 1920s, cigarette advertising began to be directed toward women as well. In the latter half of the 20th century, young people across the globe were targeted by tobacco ads. Today, the United States and Western Europe have banned many forms of media advertising for tobacco, but many young people are still exposed to a variety of tobacco advertising, especially in countries with few or no restrictions on such activity.

Advertising messages can be communicated through different forms of media broadcasting. Tobacco products have been advertised on television and radio, in the movies, in the printed media, and outdoors—for example, at sports and entertainment events, on billboards, and at places where tobacco can be bought. After publication of a national report on detrimental consequences of smoking by the U.S. Surgeon General in 1964, the negative health effects of tobacco smoking became widely known. The increased health risks related to smoking are considered a major threat to public health. Therefore, health policymakers aim to reduce smoking rates among the general population by smoking prevention policies and programs. Because tobacco advertising is assumed to encourage smokers to continue smoking and may possibly motivate nonsmokers to try smoking, health officials have advised bans on this type of commercial advertising.

Today, the United States and many countries in Western Europe place legal restrictions on commercial advertising of tobacco products. In the United Kingdom, the prohibition on tobacco advertising on television dates back to 1965. In the United States, tobacco advertising was banned from American broadcasting in 1971. Recent legislative restrictions ban tobacco advertising through other types of media, such as newspapers, magazines, and billboards. In past decades, legislative measures against tobacco advertising and promotion generally differed between Western European countries. However, in 2003, the member states of the European Union adopted a treaty prohibiting tobacco advertising in print media, radio broadcasting, and information society services. Furthermore, in its May 23, 2003, directive on the laws, regulations, and administrative provisions relating to the advertising and

This 1990 photograph shows a cigarette advertisement featuring Joe Camel that covers one wall of an apartment building in Hong Kong. During that time, international tobacco companies invested considerably in tobacco campaigns targeting new customers, including young smokers. In 1997, tobacco advertising was banned in Hong Kong. In the United States, the Joe Camel campaign was critized for deliberately targeting adolescents and children and was, therefore, ended by the tobacco company R. J. Reynolds in 1997.

SOURCE: © Richard T. Nowitz/CORBIS; used with permission.

sponsorship of tobacco products, the European Parliament and the European Council prohibited tobacco-related sponsorship of events as well as the free distribution of tobacco products. The implementation of the described restrictions in all member states was to have become effective in all member states before the end of 2005. According to a short communication by the European Commission in February 2006, most member states have transposed the directive into national law. The noncomplying countries and those where the directive has not been made national law may risk a fine. In sum, the directive on prohibition of advertising and tobacco sponsorship has generated a more harmonized European policy toward tobacco marketing.

Despite earlier restrictions on television and radio broadcasting of tobacco advertisements, tobacco companies have promoted the purchase of their products wherever and whenever they can legally do so. Tobacco products, particularly cigarettes, have been advertised widely during the past century. For example, in 2003, the Federal Trade Commission reported that cigarette companies in the United States spent more than $15 billion on tobacco advertising and promotional activities. The possible impact of the industry's advertising and promotion practices on young people's susceptibility to smoking initiation has been an important concern for health practitioners and health policymakers. Still, tobacco companies officially claim that their marketing practices are not aimed at the recruitment of new adolescent smokers but, instead, are intended to maintain or enhance the market share of a particular brand among adult smokers. In their review of internal documents from the United Kingdom's tobacco industry, Gerard Hastings and Lynn MacFadyen contradict the tobacco companies' claims by showing that marketing strategies are indeed aimed

at young people. Furthermore, a study by Joe DiFranza and colleagues shows that the "Old Joe Camel" cartoon advertisements for marketing Camel cigarettes had a much greater impact on children than on adults. It is obvious that the tobacco industry has an important financial interest in increasing the number of new (young) smokers. The relatively high risk of becoming dependent on the main addictive substance of tobacco smoke, nicotine, may be a substantial risk for young people experimenting with tobacco products. This assumption is confirmed by research indicating that nicotine dependence can be developed during the adolescent years. In her review of empirical research on adolescent nicotine dependence, Suzanne Colby and her colleagues found consistent evidence that a large majority of adolescent smokers show symptoms of such dependence. Thus, although the tobacco industry may not intend to increase the number of young smokers, it remains logical that future profits would benefit from increased smoking rates among adolescents.

Because most forms of tobacco advertising are prohibited in the United States and Western European countries, the effects of tobacco advertising may diminish considerably. However, globally, many countries still permit advertising or only partly restrict it. Furthermore, the possibilities for tobacco companies to circumvent advertising bans vary across countries. Therefore, tobacco companies have expanded their horizons, exporting their products to other countries, buying shares in foreign tobacco companies, starting new tobacco companies, and obtaining market shares by important joint ventures. To advertise their Western brands, tobacco companies have associated their cigarettes with glamorous aspects of Western lifestyle and attributes that the local population regards as desirable.

International trade in tobacco products has been present for several centuries. Nonetheless, since the 1980s, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) used the threat of trade sanctions to open Asian markets to U.S. cigarettes. The opening of the markets in Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea resulted in an increased offer of foreign tobacco products by large Western tobacco companies, such as Philip Morris and British American Tobacco (BAT). For example, research shows that between 1995 and 2000, advertising expenditures by foreign firms in Taiwan increased fourfold. In addition, based on findings from industry documents, researchers claim that tobacco companies targeted youth with their advertising campaigns. According to research findings, young smokers were recruited to provide information about what attracted them to start smoking and about how they would describe the ideal cigarette. Furthermore, cigarette companies gathered data about whether brand appeals were product- or image-related, whether mild cigarettes would attract young smokers in Taiwan, and how young smokers would react to cigarette prices. Finally, the cartoon figure, Joe Camel, was introduced in several advertising campaigns in Taiwan. As mentioned earlier, this particular character was shown to appeal to adolescents and children in the United States.

Similar marketing activities by Western tobacco companies are present in other countries, as well. For example, a 2-week field study in Mumbai, India, in 2003 demonstrated that cigarettes of the Indian Tobacco Company (a subsidiary of BAT) were advertised in newspapers and film magazines and on billboards all over the city. In China, a large tobacco-producing country, the market opened to foreign companies in 1979. Although foreign companies are hindered by bureaucratic formalities, restrictions on joint ventures, and advertising bans, the sales of Western cigarettes in China has increased. Brands such as Marlboro, which were highly advertised before the advertising ban in 1995, achieved wide recognition and consumer preference. In African countries, Western tobacco companies hold important market shares. In most of the African countries, tobacco advertising is unrestricted, and smoking rates are increasing. In the late 1980s, Eastern Europe became an interesting market for Western tobacco companies; local production was increased via joint ventures. BAT, like other tobacco companies, heavily advertised its brands by glamorizing the Western lifestyle. As in Asia, these advertising campaigns were aimed at new smokers, youngsters, and women.

In response to the shift of tobacco marketing to non-Western, developing countries, 192 member states of the World Health Organization adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Although the signatories agreed to impose restrictions on tobacco advertising, sponsorship, and promotion, many participating countries lack the means to impose the treaty's regulations effectively. Hence, global bans and restrictions on tobacco advertising may take time to be fully implemented. For many non-Western countries, this may mean that tobacco advertising can still play a role in adolescents' smoking initiation.

—Renske Spijkerman, Rutger C. M. E. Engels, and Regina J. J. M. van den Eijnden

See also Cigarette Advertising, Effects of; Cigarette Advertising, History of; Cigarette Use, Music Videos and; Cigarette Use in Television and Movies

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TV-TURNOFF WEEK

TV-Turnoff Week is the flagship program of TV-Turnoff Network, formerly known as TV-Free America. Held annually during the last week of April, TV-Turnoff Week calls for participants to voluntarily turn off their television sets and leave them off for a week. The slogan of this event is "Turn off TV, turn on life."

The TV-Turnoff Network was founded in 1994 by Henry Labalme and Matt Pawa on the basis of their belief that people should control the role that television plays in their lives. Aside from the amount of time children spend in front of a television set, the TV-Turnoff Network argues that television brings many negative effects to children. Obesity and aggression are two negative effects that are highlighted to support their initiatives. The TV-Turnoff Network believes that people should spend their time more meaningfully with their families, friends, and themselves. Based on their observation of benefits that some schools had from turning off television, TV-Turnoff Week asks people to turn off their television sets for a week and reassess the role TV plays in their lives.

The first TV-Turnoff Week was held in 1994, and 4,000 schools signed up that year, while 11 organizations supported the activity. Over the years, the event has gained more and more support from both local governments and private organizations. A majority of U.S. governors endorse the program. In 2004, more than 19,000 organizations participated in the event, and an estimated 7.6 million people participated. In 2005, nearly 70 national organizations lent their support. The 2005 TV-Turnoff Week also involved 10 other countries, such as Australia, Brazil, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, Taiwan, Italy, and Mexico.

The TV-Turnoff Network offers a number of activities that parents and teachers can use to help children fill up the time vacated by television viewing. It also provides parents with tips on how to reduce children's daily television viewing.

TV-Turnoff Week has been a success. Based on the feedback of the participants, 90% reported that they actually reduced their television viewing after their participation in this event. Encouraged by the success of TV-Turnoff Week, the first PC-Turnoff Week also took place in 2005.

—Xiaomei Cai

See also Family Environment, Media Effects on; Motherhood Project; Regulation, Television

WEBSITES

PC-Turnoff Week: http://www.pcturnoff.org

TV-Turnoff Network: http://www.tvturnoff.org/index.html

TWEENS, ADVERTISING TARGETING OF

The Media Awareness Network (2005b) describes the identification and labeling of the tween market as "one of the most important recent developments in advertising to kids." The exact origin of the word *tween* is disputed, but it generally refers to youth between the ages of 8 and 12 (although some marketers identify the demographic as extending to age 14). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are roughly 20.9 million tweens between the ages of 8 and 12, a figure that increases to 29 million if one includes those up to 14 years old. Studies show that tweens spend $40 billion on their own and influence billions more in parental purchases. Worldwide, tweens spend more than $300 billion a year and influence an additional $1.88 trillion in parental or family spending. To put it simply: "They have more personal power, more money, influence and attention than any other generation before them" (Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003, p. 1).

The tween phenomenon is not limited to the United States. *BRANDchild: Remarkable Insights Into the Minds of Today's Global Kids and Their Relationship With Brands* (Lindstrom & Seybold, 2003) provides what it claims is the most extensive study of tweens—a study of thousands of young people representing more than 70 cities and eight countries in Europe, Asia, South America, and the United States. This extensive research is used to provide marketers around the world with step-by-step advice for reaching tweens, in chapters titled "Tween Dreams for Sale," "Bonded to Brands: The Transition Years," and "The Peer Factor," to name just a few.

Being "in between" childhood and the teen years, tweens are particularly attractive to marketers because they are at an age when they are starting to develop and focus on their identity development—a fact that also makes them extremely susceptible to advertising messages focusing on self-esteem, popularity, and general identity issues. These are the years when the importance of brands and brand preference, especially as linked with identity, really take hold. Marketers feel they have to get tweens at this age to have their brand loyalty for life.

The publication of books such as *kidfluence: The Marketer's Guide to Understanding and Reaching Generation Y—Kids, Tweens, and Teens* (Sutherland & Thompson, 2003) and *The Great Tween Buying Machine: Capturing Your Share of the Multibillion Dollar Tween Market* (Siegel, Coffey, & Livingston, 2004) as well as a growing cadre of youth marketing agencies and self-proclaimed experts promise to help corporate America get it right in reaching this demographic. Some expert advice can be had for the price of a hardcover book, and other advice comes free on the Internet in the form of articles published in various industry publications such as *Selling to Kids*, *American Demographics,* and *Ad Age*.

Still other advice, however, comes at a steep price, evidencing the high stakes of marketing to tweens. For example, the marketing agency Buzzback provides pricey demographic reports and counseling for marketers wanting to understand and reach these young people. Their July 2003 "BuzzBack Tweens Exploratory" report can be had for $750. Online advertising for the report promises it will explain the behaviors, lifestyle, and thoughts of tweens, not to mention their social relationships and shopping habits. The BuzzBack report is a bargain when compared with the 230-page May 2005 Packaged Facts report, *The U.S. Market for Tweens and Young Teens: Attitudes, Aspirations, and Consumer Behavior of 8- to 14-Year-Olds,* 3rd edition, which sells for $3,500. Again, the online advertising for the report points out the "lucrative" nature of the tween demographic and the "invaluable" and "comprehensive" nature of the report. For marketers who want a more interactive experience, there are the KidPowerX conferences held all over the world and on specific topics related to reaching various segments of the youth market including tweens, again at a cost of attendance in the thousands of dollars.

To reach this lucrative demo, marketers are pulling out all the stops; their efforts include applying well-respected academic theories and research methods to studies of how to target tweens and children—what has been called "the marriage of psychology and marketing" (Media Awareness Network, 2005a). It's not unusual, for example, for marketing advice manuals to talk extensively about the work of Jean Piaget, Abraham Maslow, and other respected psychologists and sociologists in terms of how their theories can be applied to successfully target products to tween consumers. Similarly, as Juliet Schor (2004) points out, "the research has gone anthropological, with ethnographic methods that scrutinize the most intimate details" of youths' lives.

So what does all of this research and expense reveal about tweens? Branding is key, as brands are a high priority for tweens; they associate brands with their identities. Indeed, studies have shown that tweens are more concerned with brand name when making purchases than are older teens. Peers are also extremely important to tweens, and marketers take advantage of this fact by targeting tweens with such strategies as viral marketing, in which youth are encouraged to pass along marketing messages to friends, siblings, classmates, and so on. In addition, experts report on the nature of tweens as multitaskers who do not necessarily attend to any one medium alone at any point in time. This has led marketers to attempt to target tweens through a range of media, in particular through the Internet. Such intense marketing to tweens has not gone uncriticized, as advocacy groups including the Media Awareness Network urge parents to "fight back," in particular by educating tweens about the nature and intent of advertising messages.

—Sharon R. Mazzarella

See also Advertising, Market Size and; Advertising, Viewer Age and; Branding; Tweens, Media Preferences of; Viral Marketing

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TWEENS, MEDIA PREFERENCES OF

If there is one word that describes tweens' relationship with media, it is *multitasking.* Unlike any generation before them, today's tweens are surrounded by a dizzying array of media choices, a phenomenon they have learned to negotiate by consuming multiple media at the same time—talking to a friend on a cell phone and instant messaging another friend on the computer while the television plays in the background.

The exact origin of the word *tween* is disputed, but it generally refers to youth between the ages of 8 and 12 (although some marketers identify the demographic as extending to age 14). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are roughly 20.9 million tweens between the ages of 8 and 12, a figure that increases to 29 million if one includes those up to 14 years old. Studies show tweens spend $40 billion on their own each year and influence billions more in parental purchases. Worldwide, tweens spend more than $300 billion a year and influence an additional $1.88 trillion in parental or family spending. Network executives, advertisers, software designers, and technology manufacturers have all taken note of tweens' importance as media consumers and marketing targets.

For example, after years of being ignored by television programmers, tweens have become the darlings of the television industry worldwide, with Nickelodeon, the Disney Channel, and the Cartoon Network engaged in a fierce battle to be the network-of-choice for these young viewers. Media industry executives acknowledge the lucrative nature of this audience, but they also point out the difficulty of reaching them, in part because of their penchant for multitasking. A recent study reported that more than 50% of tweens do something else while watching television, including listening to music, reading, or using a computer. Another study reported that 21% of tweens (ages 8 to 12) report radio listening while watching television; other activities reported while watching television were 22%, instant messaging; 50%, computer use; and 54%, magazine reading. Moreover, studies show younger tweens report a stronger affinity for television than do older tweens. In fact, when it comes to media choices, another study found that if they had to choose, tweens would give up television before they would give up the Internet. These findings are supported by a March 2005 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation

that found that tweens (ages 8 to 14) spend roughly 3¼ hours with television daily, while older teens watch only about 2½ hours a day.

Indeed, the above-mentioned Kaiser Family Foundation study is one of the best sources for information on tweens' media preferences. A study of some 2,000 youth ages 8-to-18, the findings reveal that youth ages 8 to 14 spend about 1 hour a day playing videogames as opposed to the half hour spent by older teens. When it comes to music listening, those in the 8-to-10 range spend 59 minutes per day listening versus the hour and 42 minutes per day spent by 11-to-14 year-olds and 2 hours and 25 minutes per day spent by 15-to-18-year-olds. Similarly, younger tweens spend less time using the computer each day, with 8-to-10-year-olds reporting 37 minutes a day, 11-to-14-year-olds reporting 1 hour and 2 minutes a day, and older teens reporting an hour and 22 minutes a day. While not statistically different, tweens (ages 8 to 14) do report watching more television than do older teens (3 hours and 16 minutes versus 2 hours and 36 minutes).

Although tweens are prone to multitasking, it is clear from these numbers that television still takes up a significant amount of time in the typical tween's life. According to one study, tweens' favorite shows are *SpongeBob SquarePants, The Fairly Odd Parents,* and *The Simpsons*. Interestingly, all three are animated, evidencing tweens' lingering connection to childhood preferences. Moreover, the first two programs are staples on the Nickelodeon cable network, aiding in their three-way ratings war for control of the lucrative tween market and solidifying Nickelodeon as tween's favorite TV destination. Anchored by their Sunday (and now also Saturday) night line-up of youth-oriented, scripted, live-action programs dubbed TEENick (targeted primarily to the 11-to-12-year-old segment of the tween market) and hyped by the network as "a Sunday-night destination" for tweens, Nickelodeon leads the ratings race. The appeal of these TEENick programs, as opposed to the type of teen dramas on other youth-oriented networks such as the WB, is that Nickelodeon uses actors who are themselves tween- (or maybe teen-) aged instead of casting young-looking 20-somethings to play tweens.

Interestingly, while programmers are trying to encourage tweens to watch their programs, others are trying to get kids away from the tube. Spurred on by record levels of obesity in U.S. children, not to mention the fact that typical tweens spend more than 4 hours each day in front of some type of screen (television, computer, video games, etc.), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2002 launched an initiative called "VERB: It's What You Do!" intended to increase physical activity in kids of this age. The concept of the program is to encourage kids to incorporate more "verbs"—running, gardening, skateboarding, dancing, singing, hiking, and so on—into their lives so as to have fun while increasing their physical activity.

—Sharon R. Mazzarella

See also Computer Use, Age Differences in; Food Advertising, Obesity and; Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Age and; Kaiser Family Foundation; Mobile Telephones; Multitasking; Music Listening, Age Effects on; Television, Viewer Age and; Television, International Viewing Patterns and; Tweens, Advertising Targeting of

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UNESCO VIOLENCE STUDY

The connection between actual violent threat, media violence, family environment, and aggressive behavior has been investigated in numerous empirical studies. However, the impact of cultural differences and different regional and media environments on the relationship between aggressive content and aggressive attitudes and actions has rarely been studied. To gain insight in this area, UNESCO commissioned a global study in the late 1990s covering representative samples of children from 23 different countries. The results of the study demonstrated the direct interplay between cultural influences, the characteristics of media content and infrastructure, actual violence experience, and dispositions such as gender and thrill-seeking tendencies in creating and increasing aggressive attitudes and behavior. Cultural values and their broad acceptance, therefore, can be regarded as a major moderator for the impact of media violence.

Developed and supervised by Groebel (1999), the study used a standardized questionnaire with identical items on violent experience, media use, family and peer environment, worldviews, fear, and aggressive tendencies. The questions were distributed by the study's logistical partner, the World Scout Movement, among groups of average children; 5,500 12-year-olds from six geocultural regions around the globe—Africa, Arab States, Latin America, Asia, Europe, and Canada—replied. The study included children from rural and metropolitan areas, high and low aggression neighborhoods, and high and low media infrastructure. The countries included were Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Fiji, Germany, India, Japan, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, South Africa, Spain, Tadjikistan, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ukraine.

The results demonstrate that the combination of factors—real violence in the child's neighborhood (e.g., as a result of war, experiences in refugee camps, and gang fights, such as those in the Rio de Janeiro *favelas*), a high level of media violence (on TV, Internet, in electronic games), difficult family conditions (lack of affection, aggressive experience, physical punishment), and low levels of overall social norms—is much more likely to create aggression among children than any individual factor or partial combination of these factors. Media violence, in particular, has a strong impact only when there is a lack of immediately felt social control. This may explain why a country like Japan, where there is a high level of extremely violent media content in cartoons, animated films, movies, Internet sites, and games, has a comparatively low level of active child aggression against others. Despite the media violence in Japan, strong internalized values of a collective society apply. Where the influence of such values is much lower, violence levels go up when media violence and real aggressive experience come together, as has occurred in Brazil and South Africa. Further findings show that boys, in particular, are fascinated by aggressive heroes across cultures. Some of these, for example, Arnold Schwarzenegger as the *Terminator,* have become global icons. Studies at the end of the 20th century showed that 88% of the world's children knew this character. Children from environments with a high level of aggression were twice as likely to admire

Schwarzenegger as children from less violent environments. Overall, one third of the boys name an action hero as their primary role model whereas girls more often choose pop stars and musicians. Favorite heroes also vary by region: Action heroes are most popular in Asia (one third of participants) and least popular in Africa (one sixth of participants), where pop stars and musicians are the favorites.

Having violent role models appears to serve as a way to cope with an actual perceived threat. A remarkably large number of children seem to experience significant physical or social threats, and nearly half of the age group reported that they are anxious most of the time or extremely often. They have reason for their anxiety. About 10% of the global sample had to flee their homes at least once in their lives; nearly half report they would prefer to live in another country; in the high-aggression regions, one sixth of the children answer that most people in their neighborhood die because they are killed by others. Among children in high-aggression areas, about 10% of 12-year-olds have already used a weapon against someone. In such situations, media heroes are used for escapism and as models for ways to deal with real-life problems.

The children's worldviews are obviously influenced by actual experiences as well as media exposure. Nearly one third of children living in high-aggression environments believe that most people in the world are evil as compared to one fifth in the low-aggression areas. Slightly less than half of both groups, remarkably, report a strong overlap in what they perceive as reality and what they see on the TV screen. The importance of TV is underlined by the fact that watching television consumes about 50% more of the children's leisure time than any other activity. Three hours is the global daily average, but of course, the amount ranges from less than an hour up to more than 8 hours, depending on the availability of TV in that nation. In any case, TV was the major socialization factor around the world until the early 21st century.

The impact of media violence can be explained primarily through the fact that aggressive behavior is rewarded. Nearly 50% of those who prefer aggressive media content said they would also like to be actively involved in a risky situation (as compared to 20% with another media preference). This holds especially for boys. In addition, the risk-seeking tendency is reinforced in countries with a high level of technological development. When youngsters have access to a broad spectrum of audiovisual media, their desire to respond actively to the stimulus of aggressive media content appears to increase.

—Jo Groebel

See also Aggression, Television and; Manga (Japanese Comic Books); Television, International Viewing Patterns and; Violence, Effects of

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UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Created over a 10-year period by a global group of experts in fields ranging from government, child development, human rights, and education, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty designed to guarantee and safeguard the rights of those under the age of 18. The treaty focuses on the realms of personal identity, health, nationality, care, educational access, justice, and freedom from all forms of exploitation and harsh punishment. Two optional protocols aim to keep children safe during warfare and to bar their involvement in prostitution, pornography, and slavery. The convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1989 and went into effect in September 1990.

The primary treaty includes a preamble and 54 articles, the latter divided into three parts, and is supported by two optional protocols, one on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, and one on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The treaty and both protocols have been adopted and are in effect worldwide.

Implementation of the convention and its two optional protocols are monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for

Human Rights. No other treaty in history has gained more international support; it has been ratified by 191 of 193 UN members, excluding Somalia and the United States. Somalia has signed but is barred from ratification until it has a recognized government, and the United States has signed the treaty but is still examining every facet of compliance. As both have signed, they have thus signified that ratification at a later date is still possible.

MEDIA-RELATED ARTICLES

Two articles of the main treaty and the optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography describe in detail issues related to the media and their attendant relationships with adolescents and children.

Article 13 involves a child's right to freedom of expression and to receive and disseminate ideas through all forms of media, barring necessary legal restrictions in the interest of individual rights and reputations, the protection of national security and public order, health, and morals.

Article 17 requires ratifying nations to acknowledge the function of the mass media and to assure access for children to a diverse range of international media sources. This is to be accomplished (1) by encouraging media owners to release material relating to and intended for children; (2) by promoting international cooperation in the creation and release of child-focused audio, video, and print materials dealing with a wide range of cultures, nationalities, and internationalities, with a distinct focus on materials created in the mother-tongue of indigenous and minority populations; and (3) by endorsing the creation of guiding principles to protect children from harmful media, insofar as this will not negate other aspects of the convention.

Article 34 deals with the protection of children from sexual exploitation and specifically bars the use of children in "pornographic performances and materials." This directly relates to the optional protocol dealing with the same issue.

The optional protocol defines *child pornography* as "any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes," and it explicitly prohibits the sale of such materials. This aspect of the protocol is similar in effect to Article 34; however, the protocol merely prohibits the sale of these materials, whereas Article 34 restricts their creation.

A case can be made that Article 31 has a relationship to media, as it notes the rights of children to rest and leisure time and activities, and requires ratifying nations to respect and promote the equal opportunity to freely join in artistic, cultural leisure, and recreational activities when appropriate.

—Solomon Davidoff

See also Child Pornography; Globalization, Media and; Internet Use, International; Knowledge Gap; Obscenity; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Pornography (various entries); Rating Systems, Parental Use of; Sex, Internet Solicitation of; Sex in Television, Content Analysis of; Television Violence, Susceptibility to; UNESCO Violence Study; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Morality and; World Summits on Children and Television

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USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

Uses and gratifications theory is based on these basic ideas: that media audiences are active rather than passive; that their media choices depend on perceived needs, satisfactions, wishes, or motives; and that audiences are formed on the basis of similarities of need, interest, and taste. The primary questions to be

answered with uses and gratifications research are why do people choose certain media and not other media, and what are the rewards derived from attending to these media? *Media* may be a medium such as television or a subset such as a program type or a specific television program.

Communication scholars studied the uses and gratifications of various aspects of mass media before it became known as the uses and gratifications approach. Researchers in the 1940s looked at what people missed about reading the newspaper when the newspaper staff was on strike, the gratifications derived from listening to soap operas, reasons for becoming interested in serious music on radio, and how children develop an interest in the comics. In the 1960s and 1970s, a more systematic approach to studying how and why people use media led to the emergence of the uses and gratifications model. Blumler and Katz (1974) discuss the major elements in the model: The audience is considered to be active rather than passive in media consumption; initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member; the media compete with other sources of need satisfaction; many of the goals of mass media use can be derived from data supplied by audience members themselves; and value judgments about the cultural significance of mass communication should be suspended while audience orientations are explored. McQuail (2000) lists additional elements: Audiences are conscious of media-related needs and can voice them in terms of motivations; personal utility is a more significant determinant of audience formation than aesthetic or cultural factors; and all of the relevant factors for audience formation can be measured. With these elements in mind, researchers set out to find the attributes of different media that satisfy needs of media consumers.

They found, among other things, that television and print media were interchangeable for learning purposes; that books share an information function with newspapers and an aesthetic function with movies; and that in times of crisis, radio is the best medium for news, television is the best way to understand the significance of news, and television is best for releasing tension.

CLASSIFYING NEEDS

Based on their research in the area, McQuail, Blumler, and Brown listed four broad categories as reasons people use the media: diversion or escapism; companionship and development of personal relationships; value reinforcement and exploring personal identity; and surveillance or getting information about the world. Katz, Gurevich, and Haas came up with a slightly different list: cognitive needs—acquiring information, knowledge, or understanding; affective needs—emotional or aesthetic experience; personal integrative needs—strengthening credibility, confidence, stability, and status; and social integrative needs—strengthening contact with family and friends.

The uses and gratifications approach has been criticized for not providing predictive ability, for being nontheoretical and vague in defining key concepts, for using self-reports to determine motives, and for relying on psychological concepts such as need.

Despite criticism dating back to the 1970s, communication researchers continue to study the uses and gratifications approach. Kaye and Johnson (2004) looked at Internet users during the 2000 presidential election to see if political attitudes, Internet experience, and personal characteristics predicted motivations for Internet use. The researchers looked at respondents' motives for using the Web, bulletin boards, chat rooms, and mailing lists and found that each of these satisfied slightly different needs. These needs could be predicted by some political attitudes, demographics, and Internet use. This study is one of many examining uses of the Internet. A study by Haridakis and Rubin (2003) examined the uses and gratifications of watching television violence and found that audience characteristics, such as loneliness, isolation, and lifestyle, often are the most important predictors of aggression and also affect media use. Other studies have integrated uses and gratifications with other theories. Hofstetter (2001) combined uses and gratifications and self-efficacy: the belief that a person can perform a task successfully and that doing so produces positive consequences. He looked at self-efficacy in connection with skill in using media and found that self-efficacy measures were correlated with media use, intellectual stimulation credibility, political efficacy, and political participation. LaRose and Eastin (2004) integrated uses and gratifications and social cognitive theory into a theory of media attendance. They write that their research both supports the uses and gratifications approach and extends it by making it more theoretical; by adding new operational measures for expected gratifications, they believe media consumption can be

predicted to an unprecedented degree. Thus, some of the prior criticisms of the approach are rendered invalid.

Although children's and adolescents' use of media has not been studied as thoroughly as that of adults, one area of interest in recent years is use of violent media. Slater (2003) studied the role of alienation from school, family, and peers in predicting use of violent media content, believing that examining psychosocial disorders as predictors of the use of violent media might bridge the gap between uses and gratifications research and media effects research. He found that use of media with violent content was predicted by aggression, after controlling for sensation seeking; both having a sensation-seeking personality and being male were also predictors. Slater also found that alienation predicted use of websites with violent content.

—Kate Peirce

See also Cultural Identity; Media Genre Preferences; Television, Motivations for Viewing of; Violence, Experimental Studies of

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V

V-CHIP (VIOLENCE CHIP)

Since 2000, all new television sets with screens 13 inches or larger have been required to come equipped with a V-chip (violence chip). The V-chip works in conjunction with a content-rating system, allowing television sets to decode the content rating of each television program. Parents can then block programming with objectionable ratings from their television set. The V-chip requirement was passed by Congress as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act.

The V-chip is designed to empower parents to control their children's exposure to violence (and sex, adult language, etc.). In the official findings supporting the passage of the bill, Congress cited broad parental support for a technological solution allowing parents to mitigate the negative impact of televised sex and violence on children. Congress declared a compelling government interest in giving parents a tool to limit such effects, saying the V-chip is a narrowly tailored means of achieving that interest. This language specifically addresses the criteria used by courts to review content-related legislation impinging on First Amendment freedoms.

The text of the findings, then, reflects awareness of the potential First Amendment implications of the V-chip and the ratings system necessary for it to work. Critics argue that because the technology requires the rating of programs in order to function, the law violates the principles of free expression. Supporters of the V-chip counter that it is not a content regulation because the government is not limiting television programming in any way. Rather, the V-chip provides a tool for parents to monitor their child's television use.

In reality, however, very few parents are using the V-chip. Many people are unaware of its existence. Of those who do know about the V-chip, the majority do not know how to program it. Even in a study where a group of parents received special training on the operation of the V-chip, only a small portion were actually using it a year later; those who used it were parents who already were very active in monitoring their children's media use. A public information campaign was launched in 2001 to increase public knowledge about the V-chip.

Additional criticism of the V-chip focuses on the efficacy of the technology. Children are generally more technologically savvy than their parents, raising the question of whether kids can simply reprogram the television. A password system is in place to try to avoid this pitfall. Another issue is that sports and news programming are not rated and therefore cannot be blocked by the V-chip. Content analyses have shown sports and news shows to be high in violent content. A final challenge to the V-chip's effectiveness is that broadcasters and cable stations rate their own programming. Although this alleviates some of the First Amendment concerns, it raises questions about the validity of the rating system on which the V-chip depends.

—Jennifer L. Lambe

See also Family Environment, Media Effects on; First Amendment; Parental Regulation of Children's Media; Rating Systems, Parental Use of; Regulation, Television; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; Violence, Effects of

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VIDEO GAMES

See ENTRIES ON ELECTRONIC GAMES

VIOLENCE, DESENSITIZATION TOWARD

Most people naturally have aversive reactions to the sight of blood and gore. Some people (e.g., soldiers, surgeons) must overcome these reactions to perform their duties effectively. Their ability to do so illustrates the process of desensitization, defined as diminished psychological responsiveness to a stimulus after repeated exposure to it. Desensitization can be adaptive because it enables people to ignore irrelevant information and focus instead on relevant information. For most people, however, becoming desensitized to blood and gore can have maladaptive social consequences, such as reducing inhibitions against behaving aggressively and limiting responsiveness to victims of violence.

Hundreds of studies have shown that exposure to media violence contributes to increased societal violence. Media violence is believed to increase aggression, at least in part, by desensitizing viewers to the effects of real violence. Media violence initially produces fear, disgust, anxiety, and other avoidance-related motivational states. Repeated exposure to media violence, however, reduces its psychological impact and eventually produces aggressive approach-related motivational states, leading to increased aggression.

EFFECTS OF VIOLENT MEDIA EXPOSURE ON DESENSITIZATION

Surprisingly few media violence studies have examined physiological-emotional indicators of desensitization. Despite the small number of studies, there does appear to be a consensus in the literature that exposure to violent television can cause short-term desensitization in viewers.

Thomas, Horton, Lippincott, and Drabman conducted two studies in the 1970s examining the desensitizing effects of violent television exposure. Children were brought into a lab and hooked up to a device that measures the amount of voltage in their skin. When people get anxious, they sweat, and voltage levels increase because the sweat conducts electricity. After a baseline measure of skin conductance levels, participants viewed either a violent or nonviolent film. Next, participants viewed a film that they believed to be a real-life live event in which two children start attacking one another. Those who had viewed the violent film earlier were significantly less aroused by the "real-life" violence film than were those who had viewed the nonviolent film. Apparently those who had watched the violent film became desensitized to real-world violence.

About the same time, Cline, Croft, and Courier examined the long-term effects of violent television exposure on children and adolescents. Participants (whose ages ranged from 7 to 14 years old) reported their weekly television exposure and were divided into high-exposure and low-exposure groups. After a baseline measure of skin conductance was taken, participants viewed nonviolent and violent film sequences. Although there were no differences in arousal while viewing the nonviolent scenes, those who watched a lot of television showed less arousal while watching the violent scenes than did those who watched relatively little. Although the researchers did not measure violent television exposure, it seems very likely that those who watched a lot of television were also exposed to more violent television.

Desensitization effects have also been shown in older age groups, suggesting that these effects are not limited to children. One such study was conducted by Thomas and his colleagues. College-age participants viewed either a violent or nonviolent film clip, then watched footage from a real-life riot. Males who were previously exposed to the violent film clip were less aroused than males who had viewed a nonviolent film (these results were not found for females).

A study conducted by Linz, Donnerstein, and Adams found similar results with a college student sample. Participants who viewed 2 hours of filmed violence toward women had significantly lower heart rates while viewing later scenes of a man abusing a woman than participants who had previously viewed 2 hours of auto racing.

A recent study by Bartholow, Bushman, and Sestir examined the relationship between violent video game exposure, desensitization to violence, and aggressive behavior. Participants first completed scales that measure trait aggression and exposure to violent video games. Next, participants viewed a series of photos while their brain waves were measured. Finally, participants completed a task in which they believed they could show aggression toward another person by blasting the person with loud noise. Results showed that violent video-game players had less physiological response to violent images, which suggests desensitization. Also, physiological response to violent images was negatively correlated with aggression levels. These findings suggest a relationship between media violence exposure, desensitization, and aggressive behavior.

In summary, despite the small amount of research, there is evidence that exposure to media violence can cause physiological desensitization to other violence, even when the viewers believe the latter is real-life violence. There is also some evidence that this physiological desensitization could be linked to later aggressive behavior.

—Nicholas L. Carnagey and Brad J. Bushman

See also Aggression (various entries); Desensitization Effects; Fear Reactions; Television, Prosocial Behavior and; Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to

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VIOLENCE, EFFECTS OF

For more than 50 years, social scientists have conducted research on the effects of violent media, including TV programs, films, and video games. Researchers have found evidence of three different effects of media violence:

1. *Bystander effect:* The more violent media you consume, the more desensitized you become to violence in the real world.
2. *Aggressor effect:* The more violent media you consume, the more aggressive you become.
3. *Victim effect:* The more violent media you consume, the more afraid you are of becoming a victim of violence.

The research evidence for each type of effect is described below.

Bystander effect. People who consume a lot of violent media become less sympathetic to victims of violence. People who are exposed to violent media assign less harsh penalties to criminals than those who are not; they also perceive victims as less seriously injured and display less empathy toward them. The bystander effect appears to be an enduring one. Even several days after watching violent sex scenes, men still display an increased tolerance of aggression directed toward women.

The reduced empathy for victims of violence causes people to become less willing to help a victim of violence in the real world. Immediately after exposure to violent media, children are less willing to intervene when they see two younger children fighting. One reason why people may become more tolerant of violence and less sympathetic toward victims is because they become desensitized to violence over time. Research has shown that after exposure to violent media, people are less physiologically aroused by real depictions of violence.

The effects of violent video games on children's attitudes toward violence are of particular concern. Feeling

empathy requires taking the perspective of the victim, whereas violent video games encourage players to take the perspective of the perpetrator. Exposure to violent television increases people's pro-violence attitudes, but exposure to violent video games has the additional consequence of decreasing empathy for the victim.

Aggressor effect. More than five decades of scientific data lead to the irrefutable conclusion that exposure to violent media increases aggression. About 300 studies involving more than 50,000 subjects have been conducted on this topic (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Experimental studies have shown that exposure to media violence *causes* people to behave more aggressively immediately afterward, whereas longitudinal studies have shown that the long-term effects of exposure to violent media have a significant impact on real-world aggression and violence. In part, this is because exposure to violent media desensitizes people to violence, but it is also because violent media teach children that violent behavior is an appropriate means of resolving problems.

Experimental studies typically expose participants to violent media for relatively short amounts of time (usually 20 minutes) before measuring aggressive thoughts, feelings, and, most important, behaviors (for reviews, see Anderson et al., 2003). For example, research has shown that exposure to violent media makes people more willing to subject others to electric shocks or noise blasts.

Experimental studies have been criticized for their somewhat artificial nature (for reviews and rebuttals of these criticisms, see Anderson, Lindsay, & Bushman, 1999), but field experiments have produced similar results. For example, delinquent boys who were shown violent films every night for 5 nights were more likely than those shown nonviolent films to get into fights with other children or display verbal aggression. Similar effects have been observed with nondelinquent children who saw a single episode of a violent children's television program. It is important to note that aggression may be qualitatively different from criminal violence (Savage, 2004) and that, for the most part, laboratory and field experiments have not addressed the relationship between violent media and violent behavior. A few studies have attempted to address this relationship in a naturalistic setting by tracking changes in the occurrence of violent crime after prize fights are shown on TV or after television is introduced to a community, but these studies are few in number and have methodological flaws.

However, it is not so much the immediate effect of media violence on violent crime rates that is of concern, but rather the aggregated long-term effects (Anderson et al., 2003). Children are exposed to about 10,000 violent crimes in the media per year, and each of these has a cumulative effect on their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Violent media exposure increases children's aggressive disposition, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will commit a violent act.

Longitudinal studies offer evidence of a relationship between long-term exposure to violent television and aggressive and violent behavior in the real world. Children who watch a lot of violent television are more likely to behave aggressively later in life. For example, in one longitudinal study, children exposed to violent media were significantly more aggressive 15 years later (Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003). It is significant that this study also found that being an aggressive child was unrelated to exposure to violent media as a young adult, effectively ruling out the possibility that this relationship is merely a result of more aggressive children consuming more violent media.

Longitudinal studies have also demonstrated that exposure to violent media is related to serious, violent antisocial behavior. For example, the amount of violent media consumed is related to aggressive behavior (e.g., fighting) in high school students. Similarly, men who had watched violent media during childhood were nearly twice as likely to have assaulted their spouses 15 years later (Huesmann et al., 2003). In another longitudinal study, consumption of violent media at age 14 predicted violent crimes committed at age 22.

Although these studies demonstrate that media violence increases aggression and is related to violent crime, a number of important moderators of this effect are of theoretical and practical importance. For example, *how* violence is depicted is important. Attractive people who commit realistic violence that goes unpunished and has no apparent consequences for the victim are particularly appealing to children. Also, *who* watches violent media is important. A number of personality traits seem to place some viewers at greater risk than others. One key personality trait is aggressiveness. People who score high in trait aggressiveness behave more aggressively after being exposed to violent media, whereas there are comparatively fewer differences before and after media exposure among those

who are not aggressive. However, these findings represent trait differences at a single point in time in an experimental setting. Exposure to media violence causes trait aggressiveness, which in turn increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior. This suggests that the short-term effects of violent media observed in experimental research may become increasingly pronounced within individuals as they are repeatedly exposed to violence, leading to a downward spiral into greater levels of aggression.

Younger children appear to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of media exposure as compared to teenagers and adults. Some studies have found that boys are more influenced by media violence than girls, but these effects are inconsistent; other research has found little difference between boys and girls. This inconsistency may be a result of different measures of aggression or different gender norms in the sample populations. Longitudinal studies have shown that gender differences in aggression have decreased over time, probably because more aggressive female models have appeared on TV and because it has become more socially acceptable for females to behave aggressively. One clear difference is that the combination of exposure to sex *plus* violence appears to be particularly potent in males. In one study, college students watched a movie portraying violence, one depicting sex and violence, or a nonviolent control film. Men exposed to both sex and violence were more aggressive toward a female who provoked them than were men exposed to only violence or men exposed to no sex or violence.

The effect of violent media on aggression is not trivial, either. Although the typical effect size for exposure to violent media is small by conventional standards and is thus dismissed by some critics, this small effect translates into significant consequences for society as a whole, which may be a better standard to use in measuring the magnitude of the effect. A recent meta-analysis has suggested that the effect of exposure to violent media is stronger than other small effects, such as the effect of secondhand smoke on lung cancer, the effect of asbestos on cancer, and the effect of lead poisoning on mental functioning (Bushman & Anderson, 2001).

Although the majority of studies to date have focused on violent television and movies, the same general pattern of effects appears to be present after exposure to different forms of media, including violent music and violent video games.

Victim effect. Heavy TV viewers (defined as 4 hours per day or more) are more fearful about becoming victims of violence, are more distrustful of others, and are more likely to perceive the world as a dangerous, mean, and hostile place. In another study, television exposure was predictive of fear of crime, whereas actual exposure to crime was not. A similar but stronger relationship has been reported between watching television news and fear of crime. Like the aggressor effect, this process seems to begin early in childhood, with even 7-to-11-year-olds displaying this pattern.

In general, the victim effect seems to apply only to people's appraisals of environments with which they have relatively little experience. Although violent media make people more afraid of crime in their city, exposure to violent media has relatively little impact on people's feelings of safety in their own neighborhood. This suggests that the victim effect may be related to the *availability heuristic.* People make evaluations based on salient information, and when people have relatively little firsthand experience with an environment, they may draw on television as an additional source of information. However, the victim effect may be more complicated than a simple distortion of base rates. Some researchers have recently found that violent media do not influence people's beliefs about the prevalence of crime, but people do become more fearful of crime. This suggests that there is an emotional component to the victim effect as well.

It is clear that violent media are related to violence in the society, and they make people more likely to act aggressively, more tolerant of violence, and more fearful of crime; however, not all forms of violence are alike. Media that glamorize violence may have a particularly strong influence on the bystander and aggressor effects. In contrast, the victim effect may be constrained to media that children believe to serve an informative role about the world around them, such as television news. Whether someone is more likely to become an aggressor or a victim may also depend on who they identify with, the perpetrators of violence or their victims. However, for practical purposes, the sheer amount and variety of violence children are exposed to makes it likely that all children are vulnerable to these effects in varying degrees.

—Brad J. Bushman and Jesse J. Chandler

See also Aggression, Movies and; Aggression, Television and; Electronic Games, Violence in; Media Effects;

Music, Impact of Violence in; Schemas/Scripts, Aggressive; Television Violence; Violence, Experimental Studies of; Violence, Natural Experiments and

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VIOLENCE, EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES OF

The two hallmarks of an experimental study are control and random assignment. The researcher chooses the variable of interest (e.g., violent versus nonviolent video game) and then randomly assigns participants to levels of the variable (e.g., by flipping a coin). In an experimental study on video game violence, for example, participants do not get to choose whether they want to play a violent or nonviolent game. If participants chose the game they wanted to play, differences in behavior after viewing the game might be a result of preexisting individual differences between those who preferred to play a violent game and those who selected a nonviolent game. If violent game players were more aggressive afterward, it would be impossible to tell if the increase in aggression was due to the game or to individual differences in aggressiveness.

Numerous experimental studies have shown that exposure to violent media increases aggression (e.g., Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Experimental studies have played two crucial roles in documenting and understanding the effects of violent media. First, experimental studies increase confidence that there is a causal relationship between exposure to violent media and aggressive behavior. Second, experimental studies allow researchers to examine the specific mechanisms by which violent media influence aggressive behavior.

Although other research methods, such as field studies, case studies, and correlational studies, provide compelling evidence of a correlation between violent media and aggression, correlation does not imply causation. Longitudinal studies are better at establishing causality. Such research indicates that watching violent media as a child correlates with aggression later in life, although childhood aggression does not predict adult television viewing habits (Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003). However, longitudinal studies cannot rule out the possibility that both watching violent media and aggressive behavior are caused by an unknown third variable. Longitudinal researchers try to measure as many third variables as they can think of (e.g., poverty, IQ, social skills, parenting), but it is always possible that they forgot to measure an important third variable.

Experiments help researchers determine the precise cause of aggressive behavior. For example, violent media are arousing, and arousal increases aggression. Thus, it may be that violent content does not make people any more aggressive than other arousing media. Researchers have been able to rule out this possibility by presenting movies that are equally arousing but contain differing levels of violence.

The degree of control within experimental settings allows researchers to determine not only what causes aggressive behavior but also the process by which different variables influence each other. Violent media may increase aggressive behavior because they increase the accessibility of violent thoughts. Violent media also make people more likely to attend to hostile information and to expect others to behave in a hostile manner. Studies have also shown that violent media make people experience more angry feelings.

Researchers also perform quasi-experiments, which can provide important insights into how different types of people respond to violent media. Quasi-experiments are similar to experiments in that they ensure that all participants are exposed to the same treatment. However, they are not true experiments because they do not randomly assign participants to different conditions. Instead, they look at how

different populations respond to an identical situation. For example, one cannot randomly assign people to be males or females or to be aggressive or nonaggressive. Quasi-experiments have found that men respond more aggressively after exposure to violent media than women do and that people who score high in trait aggressiveness are particularly susceptible to the influence of violent media.

Individual experimental findings can be aggregated into larger models, and these can make specific predictions about the development of aggressive behavior. One such model is the general aggression model (Bushman & Anderson, 2002). This model combines experimental findings into a framework that explains how the relationship between the person, the situation, affect, arousal, and cognition can lead to violent aggressive behavior. Developing a model such as this through purely correlational research would be difficult because the only way the relationship between different variables can be determined is through systematically changing them and observing the consequences.

Although experiments allow researchers to reduce the number of alternative explanations, experimental studies have often been criticized because they lack *external validity.* That is, critics claim that people's behavior in a lab may not generalize to the real world for a number of reasons. Experiments often use convenience samples (such as college students) that may differ from the rest of the population, and they take place in a strange setting (a lab room). Experimenters may also unknowingly influence participants' responses (Rosenthal & Fode, 1963). Although these are all problems that need to be carefully addressed and can easily wreck an individual experiment, they are not fatal to the experimental method as a whole (Anderson & Bushman, 1997). Another weakness of experimental studies is that they can determine only the short-term effects of violent media. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine the long-term effects.

A more difficult problem for aggression research is the gap between the kinds of behavior that can be measured in the lab and the kinds of behavior that can be measured in the field. Some critics (e.g., Kaplan, 1984) have questioned whether shocking someone or delivering loud blasts of noise is equivalent to real-world aggression. Similarly, although field research can track the relationship between violent media and violent crime (Huesmann et al., 2003), it would be unethical to create laboratory situations where participants can commit violent acts on one another. It is a mistake to confuse aggression and violence or to assume that findings about one behavior necessarily generalize to the other (Savage, 2004).

Although these limitations prevent experimental research from conclusively establishing the connection between media violence and antisocial behavior, the burden of proof does not rely on experimental studies alone. Instead, researchers draw on converging evidence from many different research methods including case studies, correlational studies, field studies, longitudinal studies, and experiments. Although each of these techniques has its own faults, combined they provide a compelling case for the relationship between violent media and aggressive behavior.

—Jesse J. Chandler and
Brad J. Bushman

See also General Aggression Model (GAM); Research Methods, Experimental Studies; Research Methods, Longitudinal Studies; Research Methods, Natural Experiments; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Longitudinal Studies of; Violence, Natural Experiments and

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VIOLENCE, EXTENT OF AND RESPONSES TO

Most children and adolescents now enjoy ubiquitous access to media. A growing body of research concludes that American media are exceedingly violent. Drawing on five decades of research on media violence, this entry provides an introduction to the extent of violence in the media, examines the impact of excessive media violence on children and adolescents, and lists some efforts to help families make wise media choices.

EXTENT OF MEDIA VIOLENCE

By age 18, an American child will have seen 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence, according to 1998 figures of the American Psychiatric Association. Media scholar L. Rowell Huesmann told a Senate committee in 1999 that the average seventh grader plays electronic games at least 4 hours per week, and 50% of those games are violent.

A 2006 study by the Parents Television Council, a media watchdog group in the United States, concluded that there is more violence on children's entertainment programming than on adult-oriented television. The council's study reviewed programming shown during 3 weeks from the summer of 2005. Based on a content analysis of 440 hours of entertainment programming for children ages 5 to 10 on eight networks: ABC, Fox, NBC, WB, ABC Family, Cartoon Network, Disney Channel, and Nickelodeon, the study found 3,488 instances of violence, an average of 7.9 each hour. The extent of violence was higher than in 2002, when a similar study found 4.7 violent incidents per hour in prime-time shows on six broadcast networks.

The National Television Violence Study, in a 1996 report, identified violence in 66% of children's programming. Nearly 75% of the shows with violent content demonstrated unpunished violence, and victims were not shown experiencing pain in 58% of the violent acts. The study found that 46% of all television violence took place in cartoons for children. Children's programs portrayed violence as funny 67% of the time, and only 5% depicted the long-term consequences of violence. Parental warnings and violence advisories made the programs more of a magnet than they might otherwise have been. Parental Discretion Advised and PG-13 and R ratings significantly increased boys' interest in the shows, although they made girls less interested in watching.

The digital media—games on video, computer, and the Web—today represent the single biggest influence on children and adolescents. Interactive video games, which are based on intense violence, are emerging as the entertainment of choice for America's young people. American children with home video games play with them for an average of 90 minutes a day.

A 1993 study asked 357 seventh and eighth graders to select their preferences among five categories of video games. About 2% of the children chose educational games, whereas 32% selected fantasy violence, and 17% opted for human violence. Similar trends are found in the increasing usage of games played on the personal computer. Nearly 68.2% of the homes with children in 1999 had a personal computer, and 41% of them accessed the Internet. By the early nineties, video game revenues in the United States exceeded $10 billion, nearly double the amount Americans spend on movies.

Children and adolescents have a special liking for music. Academic studies have identified how modern music glorifies acts of violence. Modern music lyrics have become increasingly explicit, particularly concerning sex, drugs, and violence against women. Hatred and violence against women have almost become characteristic in mainstream hip hop and alternative music. Although many child advocates, parents, and policymakers have attacked such messages in music lyrics, the music industry itself has honored the musicians with annual awards.

IMPACT OF EXCESSIVE MEDIA VIOLENCE

Expressing concern over the effect of media violence on the health of children, Donald Cook, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, told a Senate subcommittee in 2000 that more than 3,500 research studies conducted since the l950s, using many investigative methods, have examined the association between exposure to media violence and subsequent violent behavior. All but 18 studies have shown a positive correlation between media exposure and violent behavior.

Adverse Effects of Media Violence

Numerous studies have shown that viewing media violence encourages in young people six adverse effects. They are aggression (propensity for violent

behavior), desensitization (less responsive to violence in real life), pessimism (cynical beliefs and attitudes), fear and insecurity (strange fears and a perpetual feeling of being unsafe), anxiety (intense apprehension of imagined danger), and unrealistic views about violence (children either think violence is all-pervasive in society or develop notions about the body's superhuman ability to survive violent acts).

A 1995 analysis conducted by the Congressional Research Service concluded that most of the existing social and behavioral science studies indicate broad unanimity on these points: (1) Human character and attitudes are negatively affected by constant viewing of televised violence; (2) television violence encourages violent behavior and affects moral and social values about violence in daily life; (3) children who watch significant amounts of television violence may exhibit aggressive behavior; (4) television violence affects viewers of all ages, intellect, and socioeconomic levels and both genders; and (5) viewers who watch substantial levels of television violence perceive a meaner world and overestimate the possibility of being a victim of violence.

In April 2006, the American Medical Association journal, *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine,* published a special issue on "Media and Children." The research presented in this issue clearly illustrates that the media have disturbing potential to negatively affect many aspects of children's healthy development, including social isolation, aggressive feelings and beliefs, consumerism, body weight, and sexuality.

One of the studies in the special issue concluded that watching too much violent television and playing too many violent video games adversely affect children's social and physical development. The researchers reported that the more violent television children watch, the less time they spend with their friends. Another study in the issue found that violent video games appear to instill poor attitudes in children when it comes to their own health, while promoting risky behaviors. Video games can influence not only aggression but also attitudes toward risk-taking behavior. Men who played the more violent video game, *Grand Theft Auto,* versus the less violent video game, *The Simpsons: Hit and Run,* had greater increases in blood pressure, more negative emotions and hostile feelings, and more permissive attitudes about alcohol and marijuana use.

A third study concluded that 81% of mature-rated video games often include explicit sexual imagery and language content not described on warning labels. The games contained depictions of substances or sexual themes or profanity that was not noted on the labels. Other studies in the special issue found problems with what children and teens are watching on television. One study said that children exposed to violent media had a significant long-term increase in aggressive behaviors, aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, and arousal levels. A fifth study found that children who watch more television eat more and gain more weight than children who watch less. Another study revealed that among teens whose parents expressed disapproval of teen sex, those who watch more than 2 hours of television a day may begin having sex at a younger age than those who do not.

Researchers feel that such studies offer increasing support for the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation that children older than 2 years spend no more than 2 hours per day with screen media; they suggest that the 2 hours should be educational. Dr. Dimitri A. Christakis, director of the Child Health Institute at the University of Washington and the coauthor of an *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* editorial commenting on the studies, feels the challenge ahead is for parents and policymakers to find ways in which media can serve the best interests of children.

HELPING FAMILIES MAKE WISE MEDIA CHOICES

Society is at risk today not only for higher levels of violence but also for a greater tolerance and acceptance of this violence. Due to their age, children and adolescents remain susceptible to adverse effects, which may lead to more complex issues as they grow up. If these effects are neither expressed nor treated, they may manifest themselves in complex mental problems, especially among those lacking strong adult and peer support.

Several organizations are now working to create awareness about these issues by urging parents, teachers, and mentors not to underestimate the impact of media violence and other objectionable content that affect young people. The American Academy of Pediatrics Violence Intervention and Prevention Program has collected and catalogued resources related to youth violence prevention. The contents of this database can be searched by age group, intended audience, item category, or key topics. The Minneapolis-based National Institute on Media and the Family, a nonprofit organization, hosts the

"MediaWise" movement, which provides information about the impact of media on children and gives people who care about children the resources they need to make informed choices.

These and other awareness efforts seek to unite communities and families and help them to make wise media choices by encouraging parents to watch what their kids watch. They also promote increased physical activity, sound nutritional choices, and moderated media time in an effort to enhance the overall health of children and adolescents.

—Debashis "Deb" Aikat

See also Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to; Violence, Effects of; Violence, Historical Trends and; Violence, Industry Stance on; Violence, Meta-Analyses of

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American Academy of Pediatrics Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (VIPP) database: http://www.aap.org/vipp

National Institute on Media and the Family's MediaWise: http://www.mediafamily.org

VIOLENCE, HISTORICAL TRENDS AND

Since 1952, there have been more than 30 separate hearings about television violence, roughly one hearing every 1½ years. These hearings often were held in response to real-life violence, including the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. However, concerns about the impact of television violence on children and adolescents have also played a part in attempts to determine the extent of television violence, to analyze effects of media violence, to educate parents, and to develop public policy in this area. In 1990s, television content rating systems and the V-chip were among the responses to television violence mandated by Congress.

Aside from network executives, witnesses at congressional hearings on television violence have included people from all walks of life and with numerous concerns—academics, industry officials, members of Congress, teachers, and children's activists. Unfortunately, the hearings rarely tried to reconcile divergent testimony. Typically, contradictory points of

view were expressed with no attempt to ascertain validity. Keisha Hoerrner noted in 1999 that even though Congress had spent more than 50 years examining this issue, it had passed only two pieces of legislation.

EARLY CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

The first congressional hearing about television violence was held in 1952 before the Commerce Committee of the House of Representatives (chair, Oren Harris, D-Arkansas) and focused on whether radio and television programs contained offensive or immoral content or emphasized violence, crime, or corruption. The Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency (Chair, Robert Hendrickson, R-New Jersey) held hearings in 1954 to determine if the rise in juvenile delinquency was related to television's crime and horror programs. In April 1955, the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency (Chair, Senator Estes Kefauver, D-Tennessee) examined the question of television violence. In 1961, at hearings held by the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency (Chair, Senator Thomas Dodd, D-Connecticut), social scientists testified that television influenced viewers, particular teenagers and children.

Senator Dodd held another round of hearings in 1964. Although he started out with praise for the industry, Dodd's positive statements were quickly replaced with talk of the network's broken promises about lessening the amount of violence on television. Dodd and his committee cited evidence that network violence had not decreased since the last set of hearings and also presented evidence showing a causal link between aggressive behavior and watching violent television.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON VIOLENCE

The mid to late 1960s saw considerable turmoil, civil disobedience, and urban unrest in the country. After the assassinations of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Lyndon Johnson established the Presidential Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence to examine and hold hearings on issues relating to violence, including the impact of the mass media. Scholars were asked to review the existing research, and one new project—a content analysis to isolate the amount of violence in prime-time and weekend-daytime network dramatic programming—was funded.

Cynthia Cooper (1996) notes that the commission's final report suggested that the constant diet of violent behavior on television had an adverse effect, especially on children, encouraged violent behavior, and fostered unacceptable values about violence. Although the report did not say that violence on television was a principal cause of violence in society, it suggested that television violence was an important contributing factor.

THE SURGEON GENERAL'S TELEVISION AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR PROGRAM

Before this report was issued, Senator John Pastore (D-Rhode Island), chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Communications, had secured $1 million to fund research under the auspices of the U.S. Surgeon General's Television and Social Behavior Program. This program framed television violence as a public health issue. It was supervised by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Scientific Advisory Committee on Television Behavior and charged with an almost impossible task: to determine scientifically the effects of violent television programs on children.

The program had an advisory committee of 12 distinguished social scientists, whose credibility and impartiality came under scrutiny when it was revealed that five members had direct ties to the television industry and that seven distinguished social scientists had been blackballed by broadcasters when the committee was selected.

The final report summarized the results by incorporating and distilling the 23 individual studies and satisfying the differing views of committee members. It stated, in several places and in several ways, that there was some evidence of a causal relation between aggressive behavior and watching violence on television. Specifically, it asserted that although viewing violence does not affect all children in the same way, viewing violence does increase the likelihood that children will become more aggressive. It concluded that there was sufficient evidence to say that watching violent programs on television could be harmful to children.

In March 1972, congressional hearings were held, and the U.S. Surgeon General reiterated that the committee, including network executives, had come to a unanimous conclusion: There was too much violence on television, and specific remedial actions were needed. Senator Pastore called for the establishment of an annual Violence Index to map the degree of

violence on television and to provide a mechanism by which to keep the issue of television violence on the public agenda.

CONGRESS AND THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

At the 1974 congressional hearings, Professor George Gerbner reported the ongoing results of annual analyses of television programming (Violence Index), and Dr. Eli Rubinstein reported that little had been done to reduce violence on television in the years following the release of the Surgeon General's report. Network representatives presented conflicting testimony; according to their measures, there was less violence on television. Senator Pastore concluded this hearing with a challenge to the broadcasters to show a real decrease in television violence at next year's Federal Communications Commission (FCC) oversight hearings.

Congress pressured the FCC in 1974 to make recommendations to protect children from television's plethora of violent programming. The networks agreed to schedule programs that were unsuitable for children after 9 p.m. This proposal, called the *family viewing hour*, was formally included in the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Television Code. This was, however, a short-lived victory because the courts ruled that the family viewing hour violated the industry's right to free speech, and it was removed from the code.

CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

In 1976 and 1977, more congressional hearings were held. The American Medical Association (AMA) testified that television violence was an environmental health risk. Yet, some witnesses said that the research on the effects of television violence was inconclusive, and many spoke out against government intervention. In September 1977, the Senate Subcommittee on Communications issued its final report, approved by a vote of 8 to 7; it noted that television violence was a cause for concern and that viewers, particularly children, might be harmed by viewing violent content. The report, however, put the blame for television's excessive violence on the American public and concluded that parents should carefully monitor what and how much television their children watched.

In the 1970s, there were several public campaigns against television violence. In 1976, the AMA issued a policy statement (1) stating that TV violence was a risk factor threatening the health and welfare of American children, (2) committing the AMA to finding ways to make television better, and (3) encouraging people to oppose TV violence and boycott companies that sponsored violent programs. Other campaigns were undertaken by the National PTA, the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Coalition on Television Violence (NCTV).

POLICY ISSUES IN THE 1980s

In 1982, the report of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior was updated and published by NIMH. The report stated that children's aggressive behavior was related to watching violent television and that these programs often taught children that violent or aggressive behavior was an appropriate way to resolve conflict. The report also took the broadcast industry to task for maintaining high levels of violent content, despite the concerns of both Congress and citizens.

The television industry immediately claimed that the report was inaccurate, and, in 1983, ABC issued a booklet that tried to refute the major conclusions about the relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior. The NIMH seven-member advisory committee, however, responded to the ABC booklet point-by-point.

The television industry changed dramatically during the 1980s. Multinational media giants took over most of the major media companies. The broadcasting and programming code of the NAB was eliminated because it violated antitrust laws. The 1980s era of deregulation furthered the perception that television was a business whose major concern was the marketplace: attracting the most viewers for the least amount of money. This environment was perhaps best summed up by FCC Chair Mark Fowler in 1984, when he described television as a "toaster with pictures." Nevertheless, concern about television violence continued.

In June 1986, Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois) sponsored a bill designed to extend limited antitrust immunity to the networks and cable companies so they could work together to find ways to reduce television violence. The bill was met with considerable opposition, and it took numerous attempts to get it signed into law. Despite a lack of support by the television networks and the American Civil Liberties Union, the Television Improvement Act of 1990 was

passed on October 28, 1989, to be in effect for 3 years. It was signed into law by President George Bush in December of that year.

CONGRESS AND THE MEDIA IN THE 1990s

Two congressional hearings in 1992 examined youth violence. The Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs discussed television violence as one of the factors that contributed to violence by juveniles, and the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Crime and Criminal Justice discussed the relationship between watching television violence and juvenile acts of violence. Testimony indicated that while the amount of violence during the prime-time hours in 1990 and 1991 had decreased slightly, violence in children's weekend-daytime programming was at an all-time high.

Hearings continued through the spring and summer of 1993 as the Television Improvement Act of 1990 approach its expiration date. These hearings, chaired by Rep. Edward Markey (D-Massachusetts), continued to pressure broadcasters to do more to control television violence. The tone of these hearings was decidedly in favor of enacting tougher government regulation of programming on the grounds that the self-regulatory measures of the broadcast industry were not working. Once again, expert witnesses testified that violence on television was plentiful and that there was a link between viewing televised violence and aggressive behavior. Testimony was also heard about the V-chip, which parents could use to block programs on the family TV.

Six weeks into the hearings, the television industry announced that parental warnings would be displayed before programs deemed particularly violent. In addition, warnings would be shown during commercial breaks and included in all promotional materials. Reaction was mixed. Some, like Congressman Markey, thought this was an important step and that the ratings would be a real help for parents. Others felt that labeling was undertaken to prevent further government intervention and that it did not go far enough.

During 1993, congressional hearings continued, and Representative Markey proposed the implementation of a rating system similar to that used by the motion picture industry, as well as a bill that would require all new television sets be equipped with V-chips to give parents an electronic tool to block specific types of programs. Although none of the bills was passed, the Television Improvement Act of 1990 was extended at the end of 1993. Senator Simon also called on the industry to begin to monitor its programming. Consequently, the industry undertook two projects during 1994. UCLA's Center for Communication Research was appointed by the networks to monitor their programming, while the cable industry contracted with a consortium of researchers from four universities to monitor cable and broadcast programming and to conduct the National Television Violence Study (1998).

In 1996, the Communications Act of 1934 was overhauled and replaced by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. In an unprecedented move, the act included two provisions to deal with television violence. First, the act mandated that a program rating system be implemented by the industry, and second, the act called for the installation of the V-chip in all television sets with a 13-inch screen or larger manufactured after July 1, 1999. The rating system was designed by broadcasters under the leadership of Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, and put into effect in January 1997.

—Nancy Signorielli

See also Violence, Experimental Studies of; Violence, Extent of and Responses to; Violence, Industry Stance on; Violence, Marketing and

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VIOLENCE, INDUSTRY STANCE ON

Concerns about violence on television are as old as television itself. The television industry, mindful of the need for advertising revenue driven by high ratings, has typically downplayed the effects of violent programming.

The industry's response to early congressional hearings on the topic in the 1950s was to point out the lack of research conclusively establishing a causal relationship between such programming and harm in viewers and to add that any studies conducted under industry auspices would be assumed to be biased, thereby placing the burden of proof elsewhere.

When the U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior was formed in the mid-1960s, with the goal of funding research projects on the effects of television violence, the networks and National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) vetoed the inclusion of many of the researchers considered best qualified to serve. They also challenged the validity of the committee's finding that it had evidence of a causal relation between viewing violence on television and aggressive and antisocial behavior.

When legislators attempted a solution in the 1970s by pressing broadcasters to adopt into their industry code a nightly *family viewing hour,* a period during which sexual and violent programming would not air, the concept was hotly contested by some broadcasters and was not always honored. In the mid-1980s, Senator Paul Simon proposed legislation that would grant broadcasters an antitrust exemption to meet to discuss joint solutions to the issue. However, the only industry action in which the 3-year antitrust exemption resulted was an agreement to fund a study conducted by independent researchers that would monitor the levels of violence in programming; the study, the National Television Violence Study, found no significant reduction in the amount of violence on television.

In 1982, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) issued a report that concluded that children learn violent behaviors from television, that heavy television viewers were more fearful and less trusting than light viewers, and that the amount of violence on television had remained consistently high through the years. The broadcast industry tried to challenge the NIMH report, with ABC publishing its own report attacking the findings point by point.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 made it a law that all TVs with a 13-inch or larger screen sold after a certain date be equipped with a V-chip device, and it gave the industry a year to voluntarily create a rating system to work with the V-chip. Industry leaders appointed Jack Valenti, who had helped establish ratings for the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), to head its implementation group, which was composed largely of executives from the major broadcast and cable networks. The group ignored parents' well-documented pleas for a content-based system, in which specific information is given about what type of content (e.g., sex, violence) a program contains, and instead implemented an age-based system, where parents are given a general guideline about how old a child should be to watch a certain program. Numerous citizens groups filed critical comments with the Federal Communications Commission, and the vocal opposition caused the industry to reconsider its stance, agreeing in 1997 to modify the system by, in some instances, accompanying the six age-based categories with content descriptors. The industry used the revision as a bargaining chip to procure a moratorium on further changes to the system to give it a chance to work, and NBC refused to go along with the use of the supplementary content ratings.

While some would claim the industry has cooperated with respect to this issue, there are many who feel that media leaders have continually dragged their heels and that their failure to create a better rating system has resulted in the V-chip being a less effective tool for parents than it could be.

—Lara Zwarun

See also National Television Violence Study; Telecommunications Act of 1996; Television Rating Systems, Parental Uses of; Television Violence; V-Chip (Violence Chip); Violence (various entries)

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VIOLENCE, LONGITUDINAL STUDIES OF

The newspapers of today too often scream headlines of violence, murder, and mayhem. It is hard to imagine how such violent behavior is developed, and psychologists have turned to events in childhood for explanations. Among the many factors that influence violent behavior, few have received as much attention and promoted as much controversy as violence in the media.

The vast majority of research concerning the effects of viewing violence in the media has focused on short-term effects. These studies conclude that viewing violence on television *does* have a negative effect on subsequent aggressive behavior and thoughts. However, these findings are limited to the short term, and it may well be that any effects dissipate as soon as the viewer leaves the laboratory. To overcome this shortfall, several longitudinal studies have been conducted to discover whether there are any longer-lasting implications of viewing violence in the media. Although this research lacks some of the controls that experimental studies offer, longitudinal studies can suggest whether such an effect is plausible over the long term.

The first longitudinal study to assess the long-term effects of viewing violence on television was started in the 1960s by Leonard Eron and colleagues. However, the initial aim was to examine the stability of aggressive behavior as a whole, and only fortuitously was television violence included as one predictive factor. The resulting data set revealed that preference for violent television programs at age 8 predicted being named by peers as someone who is unusually aggressive at age 18. This effect was found only for boys, not for girls. When compared to other predictors, including child IQ, parental aggressiveness, parental nurturance, and punishment of child, analyses revealed that preference for violent television at age 8 was the *major* contributor to aggression at age 18. Clearly, many factors contribute to the development of aggressive behavior; however, Eron et al.'s study showed that preference for violent television is a key factor and should be not ignored.

A follow-up study of the participants in Eron et al's study revealed similar findings, although 22 years had passed since the initial measurements were taken. Preference for violent television at age 8 still predicted aggression and criminal behavior—now at age 30—but again only for males. This effect remained stable even after controlling for other predictive factors, such as socioeconomic status, intellectual achievement, and parental responsiveness. Interestingly, there was no relationship between current preference for violent television and aggression in adulthood. The roots of aggressive behavior appear to be developed early in childhood, and later choices concerning television viewing seem to have much less influence than early exposure.

The above studies all took place in the United States, where levels of television violence have been criticized for being exceptionally high. However, research suggests that violent television has an influence on children worldwide, although the relationship is not always as straightforward. In a cross-national study, Rowell Huesmann and colleagues collected longitudinal data from five countries: the United States, Australia, Finland, Israel, and Poland. The purpose of this study was to examine whether the relationship between TV violence viewing and aggressive behavior in children from the ages of 6 to 11 was the same regardless of different cultures. Although the countries varied widely in violence rates, language, sex-role expectations, and TV broadcasts, aggressive children viewed more television, preferred more violent programs, identified more with television characters, and perceived violence as more "real life," regardless of the country of origin. A long-term relationship between early exposure to TV violence and later aggression was also revealed for boys in Finland and for both boys and girls in the United States, Poland, and Israel, even when initial aggressiveness was controlled. Separate studies in the Netherlands and in South Africa also revealed a similar relationship. Combined, these studies have two important conclusions: They show that the long-term relationship between early TV habits and later aggression is not limited to the United States and that violence in *girls* as well as in boys is linked to early exposure to violence on television.

In a more recent longitudinal study by Huesmann and colleagues, several factors known to contribute to aggressive behavior, such as TV violence viewing, socioeconomic status, intellectual ability, and a variety of parental factors, were measured in children ages 6 to 10 and then 15 years later. As in previous studies, results revealed that childhood exposure to television violence predicted adult aggression even after controlling for other factors, including childhood

aggressiveness. Males who viewed high levels of violence as children were more likely to have "pushed, grabbed, or shoved their spouse," to have been convicted of a crime, and to have a traffic violation. Females who viewed high levels of violence as children were more likely to have "punched, beaten, or choked" another adult, had more traffic violations, and were more likely to be involved in criminal behavior.

Overall, these studies show that viewing TV violence in childhood contributes to the development of aggression throughout a person's lifetime. A heavy diet of TV violence in childhood is likely to shape a child's state of mind concerning real-life violence. Although the violent cartoons preschoolers are watching today may seem relatively innocuous at first glance, it is clear that they may be having a large influence on later aggression and criminal behavior.

—Sarah M. Coyne

See also Aggression, Television and; Cognitive Script Theory; Research Methods, Longitudinal Studies; Schemas/Scripts, Aggressive; Television Violence; Television Violence, Susceptibility to

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VIOLENCE, MARKETING AND

The abundance of marketing and advertising to children in the United States is often criticized, independently of the product being sold. However, when the marketed products are violent or aggressive in nature, the concern among parents, researchers, politicians, and health professionals intensifies. Today, not only are intensely violent media portrayals readily available to children, but the companies that make these very products target young people under 17 with movies, music, and video games created for mature audiences. For example, one might call into question the appropriateness of a movie studio running an ad for a violent R-rated movie during television programs frequently viewed by young people. Likewise, video game manufacturers frequently run print ads for violent M-rated video games (for mature audiences) in magazine publications often read by young people. At the core of this issue is the idea that the marketing of violent entertainment to young people is thought to increase their demand for, and thus consumption of, violent media, which further heightens concerns over the potential negative effects of exposure to media violence.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES TARGET YOUNG PEOPLE?

The issue of media violence and its effect on children has been a recurring concern to policymakers for the past several decades. However, in recent years, parents, researchers, politicians, and health professionals collectively have voiced their concern over the marketing of violent media products to young audiences. In the wake of a wave of shootings in schools, particularly the violence at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, President Bill Clinton requested in 1999 that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) conduct a study of the marketing of violent entertainment products to youths. In response to Clinton's request, the FTC prepared a report on the marketing of violent entertainment to children, which the commission presented to Congress in September 2000. This report found that the marketing plans for movies, music, and video games expressly targeted children and that media plans for these products called for advertising them in media most likely to reach children and adolescents. For instance, of the 44 R-rated movies selected for the FTC study, 80% of the marketing plans targeted children under 17. Likewise, of the 55 music recordings with explicit content, 27% of the marketing plans behind these music products explicitly identified teenagers as part of their target audience. Furthermore, of the 118 M-rated violent video games sampled in this study, 70% targeted children under 17, with 60% of the marketing plans specifically aiming to target youth under 17. In light of these findings, the FTC stated that the practice of

marketing violent movies, music, and electronic games to children undermined the integrity of the industries' ratings and frustrated parents' attempts to make informed decisions about their children's exposure to media violence.

Since the release of the initial report in 2000, the FTC has conducted four follow-up reports issued in April 2001, December 2001, June 2002, and July 2004. The reports issued in 2001 and 2002 found that the entertainment industry had made some progress in providing rating information in advertising and in limiting advertising for violent media products in media popular with minors. For instance, the reports indicated some progress by the film and video game industries in terms of limiting advertising in popular teen-targeted media; however, the reports also noted little to no progress in the advertising practices of the music industry.

Unfortunately, the most recent report of 2004 indicates a resurgence of some problematic practices. For instance, the report found that while rating practices have improved, the movie studios continue to market violent R-rated films and DVDs during television programs with significant adolescent audiences; furthermore, some film studios place movie promotions in other nontraditional venues (e.g., malls, fast-food product tie-ins, etc.) likely to be seen by younger audiences. Meanwhile, despite the music industry's successful reduction of advertising in print media popular among teens, they continue to place ads during television programming with significant teen audiences. Finally, with respect to video games, the FTC found progress with the marketing of M-rated video games; however, advertisements for teen-rated video games frequently appear in media popular with preteen audiences. In short, although some progress is being made in certain areas and by certain industries, the marketing of violent entertainment content to youth is still very much a part of the current media landscape.

REACTIONS TO THE FTC REPORTS

Not surprisingly, the FTC reports have raised a great deal of concern in Congress, leading to congressional hearings and pressure on the entertainment industries to self-regulate. No specific legislative proposals to restrict the marketing of violent entertainment are likely to become law anytime soon; however, bills attempting to address the problem have been proposed. One such bill, introduced by Senator Joseph Lieberman, sought to prohibit marketing of adult-rated movies, music, or video games to minors. Certainly, efforts to regulate violent media raise First Amendment concerns, and for this reason, the FTC has largely recommended that Congress continue to encourage self-regulation.

Other activist and advocacy groups, tired of calls for industry self-regulation, have taken a more proactive stance, calling for specific actions against the entertainment industries. One such group, Lion & Lamb, a national grassroots parents' organization seeking to stop the marketing of violence to children, has put forth a set of actions for all industry groups, including (1) the creation of an independently funded ratings board, appointed by Congress, which would a create user-friendly, research-informed, uniform rating system for all entertainment products; (2) the end of deceptive advertising practices documented in the FTC report, such as advertising adult materials in media popular among youth; (3) enforcement of age-appropriate previews before feature presentations at movie theaters and on videocassette releases; and (4) the end of cross-marketing adult brands such as violent adult-rated movie characters in the guise of children's products (such as toys and Halloween costumes). Although these suggestions are admirable and well-founded (especially in light of the body of research on media violence and young people), their implementation will probably face opposition by the entertainment industry. Yet, as the number of entertainment products continues to explode, careful consideration must be given to the innovative and deceptive techniques used by the entertainment industry to market violent entertainment products to young people.

—Angela Paradise

See also Advertising, Effects on Children of; Advertising, Exposure to; Advertising on Children's Programs; Aggression (various entries); Federal Trade Commission; Violence, Effects of

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VIOLENCE, META-ANALYSES OF

Generations of communication researchers have investigated the impact of violence portrayed by the mass media on media users' aggression, especially with regard to entertainment products. A vast number of empirical studies have been reported in communication, social and developmental psychology, and medical research. For decades, this research addressed the effects of television violence. As video games became extremely popular among children and adolescents, the focus shifted to include interactive entertainment. Because video games present graphic violence with high frequency, realism, and, most important, the opportunity for the users to participate in violent scenes, they have been examined as a potentially powerful facilitator of aggressive behavior in young people.

Overall, thousands of individual experiments, surveys, longitudinal studies, and other investigations address issues of media violence and its impact on aggression. It is virtually impossible to draw integrative conclusions from this overwhelming mass of findings. Therefore, experts in the field have presented meta-research that attempts to summarize the results of many single studies to draw the big picture. One approach is a literature review that discusses findings of different studies to draw conclusions about what the findings show. However, in the domain of video game violence, the available reviews disagree on the general impact of violent games. An alternative approach is meta-analysis, which is a computation procedure that calculates comparable statistical parameters reported from individual studies into average indicators of connections between variables. Meta-analysis is a powerful and extremely important tool to assess the impact of media violence on aggression.

THE TECHNIQUE OF META-ANALYSIS

In meta-analysis of media violence effects, information is collected from as many individual studies as possible; the analysis pays special attention to effect sizes, that is, statistical values that indicate the influence of media violence on aggression as found in a given study. Effect sizes can be computed in standardized ways and allow (within certain limitations) for comparability across different studies on the same topic. Technically, the statistical fusion of effect size data from different studies creates one huge data set in which all participants from the individual studies are combined. The meta-analytic procedure then reinvestigates the effect of media violence on aggression based on a virtual sample, typically comprising several thousand participants. Consequently, the results of the meta-analysis are much more substantial and valid than any individual study because the latter is limited to one specific (usually small) group of participants and one specific operationalization of *media violence* and of *aggression.*

META-ANALYTIC FINDINGS ON THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISION VIOLENCE

One of the most widely cited meta-analyses on the impact of television violence has been published by Paik and Comstock (1994). They included data from 217 relevant studies, both experimental and nonexperimental, conducted between 1957 and 1990. This analysis found a clear and robust effect of the consumption of violent TV programs on antisocial and aggressive behavior, with the effect magnitude depending on methodological aspects but not reaching zero in any subanalysis. Anderson and Bushman (2002) summarized their meta-analytic findings from 284 studies with more than 51,000 participants similarly: Regardless of the method applied and the empirical procedures of individual studies, correlations between TV violence consumption and aggression ranged between .10 and .30, with extremely low statistical probabilities of zero-correlations. These findings clearly indicate the causal connection between TV violence and aggression, and they suggest a considerable magnitude of effect, which definitely deserves a debate on political and educational countermeasures.

META-ANALYSES OF THE IMPACT OF VIDEO GAME VIOLENCE

To keep track of the quickly growing number of studies on video game violence, two meta-analyses have already been conducted in this comparatively young branch of research. Essentially, these studies led to conclusions similar to those in the meta-analyses on TV violence. Sherry (2001) combined data from 25 thematic studies and concluded from his meta-analysis that an effect of video game violence on aggression exists; however, he interpreted the average effect size to be lower compared to effect sizes computed in TV violence research. In contrast, Anderson (2004) found an "alarming" substantial effect of video game violence. He argued that many mixed findings from various studies were due to methodological shortcomings, which contributed to hide the true, strong effect size.

CONCLUSIONS

The available meta-analyses leave very little if any doubt that there is a causal connection between frequent consumption of media violence, both on television and in video games, and the tendency to display aggressive cognitions, emotions, and behavior. The relative strength of this effect remains to be discussed in light of different theories, in comparison to alternative risk factors, and taking into account inherent problems of meta-analytical procedures (primarily the so-called publication bias: Studies that find a media effect are more likely to be published and thus included in meta-analysis than are studies that do not find a media effect). For instance, Anderson and his colleagues argue that the effect of media violence is profound and that drastic regulatory and educational countermeasures are indicated. Sherry (2001), in contrast, acknowledges the existence of media violence effects but is reluctant to consider the average effect size extremely high. Therefore, to guide political and educational response to media violence, findings from meta-analyses not only demand theoretical elaboration but need to be specified for individuals with different risk backgrounds. One very promising departure in this direction is the work by Slater and his colleagues, which demonstrates the importance of synergistic interactions between media violence consumption and other risk factors of aggression, such as rejection by peers or parental conflicts (Slater, 2003; Slater, Henry, Swaim, & Anderson, 2003; Slater, Henry, Swaim, & Cardador, 2004). Future research on media violence, including new meta-analytic approaches, should focus on the specification of such interaction effects, rather than debating the general impact of media violence, which is too abstract to allow for direct countermeasures taken by politicians, parents, and teachers. Nevertheless, it should be clear—especially from the meta-analytic studies—that there is substantial reason to be concerned about media violence and that it is necessary to implement effective intervention strategies (see Cantor & Wilson, 2003, for a comprehensive overview).

—Christoph Klimmt

See also Aggression, Movies and; Aggression, Television and; Aggression, Electronic Games and; Cartoons, Violence in; Electronic Games, Violence in; Interactivity; Movies, Violence in; Music, Impact of Violence in; National Television Violence Study; Research Methods, Meta-Analyses; Television Violence; UNESCO Violence Study; Violence (various entries)

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VIOLENCE, NATURAL EXPERIMENTS AND

What are the effects of media violence on the aggressive attitudes and behavior of those exposed to it? This question has for several decades been the focus of a large body of research, but its importance was not anticipated until television had become ubiquitous. As a result, there have been few opportunities to address this question through before-and-after studies of natural experiments. This entry describes three natural experiments addressing the issue of the effects of media portrayals of violence and aggression. In each study, the researchers took advantage of a natural experiment to study the impact of exposure to media violence on aggressive attitudes or behavior. They chose to study different aspects of the issue: children's aggressive behavior, homicide rates, and children's conception of crime. They obtained their data in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the United States. In each case, the data revealed evidence that exposure to violence on television has effects.

Several different methodologies have been used to study whether violence in the media can affect aggressive attitudes and behavior, and if so, whether effects occur not only in laboratory settings but also under real-life circumstances, where many other influences, including social controls regarding aggression, also operate. These questions have been extensively studied. They are cause for concern in part because aggressive behavior tends to be stable from childhood through adolescence into adulthood, so to the extent that portrayals of aggression and violence in the media do have an effect in childhood, this effect is likely to be maintained into adulthood. Natural experiments (and field experiments with random assignment of individuals to conditions) have the advantage that causal inferences can be made in real-life, ecologically valid settings.

CHILDREN'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

One of the studies in the Notel, Unitel, and Multitel research project, a before-and-after natural experiment in three Canadian towns, focused on children's naturally occurring aggressive behavior. In this study, conducted by Joy, Kimball, and Zabrack, children were observed during free play on the school playgrounds before school, at recess, at lunchtime, and after school. In Phase 1 of the natural experiment, before Notel had television reception, children in Grades 1, 2, 4, and 5 were observed in all three towns. In Phase 1, Unitel had one TV channel, and Multitel had four. Two years after Notel had obtained TV reception (one channel, the same as in Unitel), children in Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 were observed in all three towns. Reception did not change in Unitel and Multitel between Phases 1 and 2. This provided before-and-after cross-sectional comparisons (same-age but different children) between the phases for children in Grades 1 and 2. It also provided longitudinal comparisons of the children who were in Grades 1 or 2 in Phase 1 with themselves 2 years later, when they were in Grades 3 or 4 in Phase 2. Another set of cross-sectional comparisons was made for Phase 1 children in Grades 4 and 5 with Phase 2 children in Grades 3 and 4. This was possible because in all three towns and in both Phase 1 and 2, there were no grade differences (i.e., the mean aggression scores did not differ for Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

In each grade, each town, and each phase, five boys and five girls were observed, for a total of 120 in all three towns in each phase, with each child observed for 21 one-minute intervals. The children were randomly selected, but no more than one child per family was included in the entire sample. The

observations were time-sampled across different days of the week and periods during the day, over the course of 2 weeks, so each child was observed on many different occasions, with the order randomly determined and not dictated by the action of the moment. Neither the children, nor their parents, nor the teachers were told that the observers were interested in either aggressive behavior or television. The two female observers used checklists of 14 physically aggressive behaviors (including hits, slaps, punches, kicks, bites, pushes, holds, grabs) and 9 verbally aggressive behaviors (including disparaging, mocking, curses, commands in a loud angry tone of voice, and threats). For each one-minute interval, each observer made a check by each behavior each time it occurred. Accidental aggression and rough-and-tumble play were not included. Interobserver reliability was established initially during training in each phase, checked periodically during the observations, and was found to be high in both phases. The Phase 2 observers were different from those in Phase 1, and they did not know the data (e.g., mean levels of each behavior or overall patterns) from Phase 1. The observers were as unobtrusive as possible. The children were aware that two women were on the playground but were not aware of which particular child was being observed. They were accustomed to adults (teachers) wandering around the playground. The observers never interfered with the children's play, so the children mostly ignored them.

In addition to the behavioral observations on the school grounds, peer ratings and teacher ratings of aggression were obtained for each child. In individual interviews, each child indicated the three students in his or her class who were the bossiest, fought the most, talked back to the teacher the most, argued and disagreed the most, and pushed, shoved, and poked the most. Each teacher rated each child in her or his class on several 7-point scales ranging from *not at all characteristic* to *very characteristic* (of the child being rated). Both positive and negative behaviors were rated and grouped into four composite teaching ratings: (1) aggressive, argumentative, bossy, and hostile; (2) active and loud; (3) competitive and dominant; and (4) friendly and honest.

In general, the peer and teacher ratings of aggression were consistent with the researchers' observations of aggressive behavior on the school playground. This indicates that the observed behaviors had external validity; that is, the children observed during this study to be relatively aggressive also were considered by the other children and their teachers to be aggressive relative to their peers.

There were no differences in the observations of aggressive behavior related to grade level. The most important question was whether there would be an increase in the aggressive behavior of Notel children following the arrival of TV reception in their community, and there was. Notel children in the longitudinal sample increased from Phase 1 to 2 in both physical and verbal aggression. This could not be attributed to maturation (being 2 years older) because there was no evidence of differences in aggressive behavior among the grades in either phase and because there was no change for Unitel or Multitel children, who also were 2 years older. Twelve cross-sectional comparisons from Phase 1 to Phase 2 were made in each town (physical aggression: Grades 1 and 2 girls in Phase 1 versus Grades l and 2 girls in Phase 2; the same comparison for boys; the same comparison for the girls and boys combined; a similar set of three comparisons for Grades 3 and 4 versus 4 and 5; and a similar set of six comparisons for verbal aggression). In Notel, 10 of the 12 comparisons revealed a statistically significant increase in aggression; the other two increases were not statistically significant.

None of the 12 Unitel comparisons and only 2 of the Multitel comparisons (for girls, Grades 1 and 2, verbal aggression decreased; for boys and girls combined, Grades 3 and 4, physical aggression increased) were statistically significant. The increases in Notel occurred not only for both physically and verbally aggressive behavior and for both girls and boys, but also for children who were initially low in aggressive behavior as well as those who were initially high. This latter finding is noteworthy because some people have contended that only children initially high in aggression are affected by media violence.

The catharsis hypothesis would predict a decrease in aggression in Notel following the introduction of TV due to vicarious release of aggressive impulses while viewing. All other theories about the effects of media violence on aggression (such as modeling/imitation, disinhibition, desensitization, and arousal) would predict an increase in Notel. Predictions about comparisons among the towns within each phase are less clear. Most groups have dominance hierarchies and methods of controlling aggression among members, but tolerance of aggression varies considerably from group to group. It would not necessarily be expected, therefore, that the mean levels of aggression for the three towns would form a sensible pattern in

relation to the availability of TV. In Phase 1, the mean levels of verbal aggression in Notel and Unitel were lower than that in Multitel, and there were no Phase 1 differences in physical aggression. Two years after the arrival of TV in Notel, the level of verbal aggression was significantly higher there than in either Unitel or Multitel, which did not differ. In Phase 2, Notel children were highest in physical aggression, exhibiting more than Unitel children, who were lowest; Multitel children were in between and not significantly different from Notel or Unitel.

The researchers (Joy, Kimball, & Zabrack, 1986) also compared individuals with differing amounts of reported exposure to TV. The results supported the findings described above. For example, 67% of the variance in the observed physical aggression of Unitel and Multitel children in Phase 2 was predicted by other measures. In particular, hours of TV viewing in Phase 2 added significantly to this prediction, over and above observations of physical aggression and the aggression ratings of children's peers from Phase 1. This is an important finding because aggression tends to be very stable across time, so the fact that concurrent TV viewing added significantly to such prediction underscores its effect.

The pattern of findings obtained in this study suggests that the social milieu is important. When social controls are adequate, either for individuals or groups, aggressive behaviors acquired from various models, including TV, may not be performed because of the individual's inhibitions against behaving aggressively. When the social controls are disrupted, however (which may have been what happened with the advent of TV in Notel), behaviors acquired from all sources may be more likely to be performed.

When considering these and other results regarding the influence of TV on aggression, it is important to remember that aggression is a socially disapproved behavior, albeit sometimes associated with mixed messages. Parents, teachers, and others generally try to teach children not to be physically and verbally aggressive. An effect, therefore, must be strong enough to overcome or go beyond the individual's inhibitions against behaving aggressively in order to be measurable by the researchers.

HOMICIDE RATES

In a second example of a natural experiment focused on aggressive behavior in relation to exposure to television, Centerwall (1989) used epidemiological data to compare homicide rates in the United States, Canada, and South Africa. He chose homicide as his measure of violence because homicide victim statistics are very accurate. He limited his comparisons to white homicide victims in the United States and South Africa because of the different living conditions for nonwhites in the two countries. For Canada, he used the total homicide rate because Canada's population in 1951, during the period of interest, was 97% white. The focus of his comparisons among the three countries was 1945 to 1974. Television reception became available in the United States in the late 1940s and in Canada in the early to mid 1950s, but not until 1975 in South Africa. Between 1945 and 1974, the homicide rate for white victims in the United States increased 93%. Over the same period in Canada, it increased 92%. In South Africa, where TV was banned, the homicide rate declined by 7%. Centerwall also found that within the United States, the regions that acquired television first were the first to have higher homicide rates.

Centerwall's study found a lag of 10 to 15 years between the introduction of television to a country and its increase in the homicide rate, which he attributed to childhood exposure to violent media content. Homicide is primarily a late-adolescent and adult act, so the "television generation" must come of age before a media effect is seen. Centerwall considered several alternative possible ("third variable") explanations for the pattern of homicide rates in the three countries, including differences or changes in age distribution, urbanization, alcohol consumption, capital punishment, economic growth, civil unrest, and availability of firearms. He concluded that none of these alternatives provides a viable explanation for the observed homicide trends following the introduction of television in Canada and the United States, and, by comparison, South Africa, where television reception was not available over the same period (1945–1974). He speculated that white homicide rates in South Africa would show a similar increase, beginning in the early 1990s, following a similar lag of 10 to 15 years after television became available there.

CHILDREN'S CONCEPTIONS OF CRIME

A third example of researchers who took advantage of a natural experiment to study the relationship between exposure to television and some aspect of aggression is research conducted by Murray and Kippax during 1977 and 1978. They studied three Australian towns of similar size and social structure that differed in the duration,

content, and magnitude of their experiences with TV. The "high-TV" town had had 5 years of exposure to a commercial channel and 2 years of exposure to the national public channel (Australian Broadcasting Corporation). The weekly broadcast time was greater for the public (98.8 hours) than the commercial (59.5 hours) channel, and the public channel had considerably more educational/instructional programming for children and adults, as well as more news and documentaries. The second town, called "low-TV," had had 1 year's exposure to the public ABC Channel, and the "no-TV" town had no TV exposure. Murray and Kippax sampled families with children under 12 in each town and estimated that this included 40% of such families in the high-TV town, 40% in the low-TV town, and 52% in the no-TV town. They reasoned that children in the high-TV town should show a more differentiated conception of crime because it was the only town with extensive exposure to police crime dramas. To test this hypothesis, they presented children with paired comparisons from a list of illegal activities (spying, murder, drunkenness, assault, kidnapping, bank robbery, and shoplifting). The items were presented in pairs and repeated until each item had been presented with all the others. The children rated the similarity of each pair on a 5-point scale from *not at all alike* to *very much alike.* The children in the new-TV and low-TV towns had a conception of crime reflecting two dimensions: seriousness of the crime and whether it was directed toward property or people. The conception of the high-TV town children included those two dimensions and added a third dimension, possibly reflecting the frequency of the crimes of drunkenness, spying, and shoplifting in the real versus televised world.

—Tannis M. MacBeth

See also Aggression, Television and; Media Effects, History of Research on; Notel, Unitel, Multitel Study; Research Methods, Natural Experiments; Violence, Experimental Studies of

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VIRAL MARKETING

Viral marketing (also referred to as *buzz* or *grassroots* marketing) takes advantage of preexisting social networks and new media technologies to increase brand awareness and drive product trials and sales. Viral campaigns work by *seeding* or *infecting* a select group of socially active recipients with a marketing message, which they then spread through their social networks much like a viral epidemic. Within media theory, viral marketing is consistent with the two-step flow model developed by Katz and Lazarsfeld in the 1940s, which asserts that the media influence a minority of individuals, called opinion leaders, who, in turn, influence their peers through interpersonal communication.

The founders of Hotmail, a free email service, are credited with coining the term *viral marketing* in 1996. Originally, it described the practice of appending advertising about the email service to users' outgoing messages, thus turning each user into a viral agent who infected others with every message sent. Hotmail gained 12 million subscribers in 18 months at a total cost of $500,000, compared to $20 million spent by its nearest competitor, Juno, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of viral marketing.

Viral campaigns have become increasingly sophisticated in nature and use both online channels, such as email, websites, and instant messaging, and offline channels, such as text messaging, paging, and word-of-mouth. Commonly recognized types of viral marketing include pass-along viral, which involves the forwarding of content that users find interesting or entertaining; incentive viral, which offers various rewards to users for disseminating information or providing referrals; and undercover viral, which poses as nonmarketing content in the form of websites, videos, or games. Successful viral campaigns can produce significant increases in sales or awareness but may backfire if consumers question their authenticity.

Adolescents are particularly susceptible to viral marketing for two reasons. First, having grown up with new media technologies such as email and instant messaging, they are almost constantly connected to a wide network of peers. Second, adolescents are greatly influenced by their peers and aspire to fit in within social groups. Viral marketing exploits the combination of these factors by infiltrating young people's social networks and channels of communication. Tweens (children ages 9 to 13) are a particularly attractive marketing target, as they are in the process of forming identities and lifelong consumer preferences. Viral marketing is also seen as effective in reaching media-savvy teens who have become immune to advertisements in mainstream media, such as television and radio.

Viral marketing has been used successfully to promote a wide range of product categories to children and adolescents, including carbonated drinks, cosmetics, movies, music, and even motor oil. Noncommercial actors also recognize the effectiveness of viral marketing. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention incorporated viral components in a social marketing campaign aimed at increasing levels of physical exercise among tweens.

One viral technique that is gaining popularity among youth marketers involves the recruitment of highly social teens, who are seeded with marketing messages and samples of new products. Viral teens then share their opinions about these products with peers, in effect acting as brand advocates. This technique, however, has come under attack by consumer advocacy groups, which argue that viral teens often neglect to disclose that they have been solicited by marketers to endorse their brands. The stealth nature of viral marketing among youth raises a number of ethical concerns and is, perhaps, its most alarming feature, one that has yet to be adequately addressed by media researchers and policymakers.

—*Nadia Kaneva*

See also Branding; Peer Groups, Impact of Media on; Tweens, Advertising Targeting of

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VIRTUAL REALITY

Virtual reality (called VR for short) is a computer-generated artificial image or environment that is presented to the user in such a way that it appears and feels like a real space or situation. With a VR device, young people may "experience" flying a spaceship right at home by wearing VR goggles and headsets. A user is "virtually there," hence the term. The VR experience effectively immerses the user to interact and control the virtual world in a dynamic way.

This entry provides a basic introduction to VR, explains its application and relevance to children and adolescents, and examines its conceptual features and adaptations such as *telepresence* (remotely accessing distant but real environments). Using telepresence techniques, engineers and doctors have the potential of serving a global audience without the time and trouble of traveling across nations.

APPLICATION AND RELEVANCE OF VR FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

VR is a relatively new medium of human-computer interaction. Interlinked computers use visual and auditory stimuli to create a three-dimensional environment in which the user is immersed. Instead of seeing the real world, the user interacts with this surrogate environment. As the user's level of immersion increases, the user feels more like a part of that environment.

Widespread applications of VR for children and adolescents include entertainment (VR games that simulate space-flight adventures and dragon fights), education (a VR movie on the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World"), medical treatment (therapeutic VR games designed to distract young people from pain), and other uses (such as VR aerospace simulators that impart the virtual experience of driving or flying). VR denotes a simulated environment in which the user interacts with a series of sensors and sophisticated output devices. Modern VR technology has widespread use in games, amusement parks, performing arts, show business, and other forms of entertainment; it requires application of the British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's concept of "willing suspension of disbelief."

In medical settings, VR provides children and adolescents with beneficial effects such as VR

distraction, which relieves anxiety associated with chemotherapy among young people; VR diversion, which reduces distress about invasive medical procedures; and immersive VR, which can improve the attention span of children and adolescents with behavioral problems and help them learn to focus on tasks. The theoretical principle underlying such VR applications is related to diverting attention away from a noxious stimulus and focusing instead on a more pleasant environment. VR has myriad applications in different fields, notably edu-tainment, engineering, design, marketing, communication, biotechnology, and even military training.

CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS OF MODERN VR

The conceptual origins of the modern VR can be attributed to the vision outlined in computer scientist Ivan Sutherland's 1965 paper, *The Ultimate Display.* VR researcher Frederick P. Brooks, Jr. (1999) paraphrased Sutherland's vision in these words:

> Don't think of that thing as a *screen,* think of it as a *window,* a window through which one looks into a *virtual world.* The challenge to computer graphics is to make that virtual world look real, sound real, move and respond to interaction in real time, and even feel real. (p. 16)

Sutherland proposed an immersive, three-dimensional (3-D) display for computer graphics. To this end, the first 3-D head-mounted display helmet was designed to link more closely the user's mind and computer. Sutherland attempted to place the user "inside" the computer graphics. The head-mounted display used binocular computer screens, each displaying the same image, and a gaze-tracking device, which helped mimic 3-D.

Sutherland's head-mounted display was so heavy that it had to be suspended from the ceiling. In sharp contrast to such cumbersome creations, modern VR input devices include data gloves, which track hand positions and configurations to body suits, which sense the head-to-toe orientation of the VR participant. Output devices include complex head-mounted displays and surround-sound audio systems. Early adoption of VR, even with less-than-satisfactory technologies, enabled the U.S. military and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to create interactive computer-generated imagery; that imagery helped them to design and refine effective applications that would otherwise have taken years of trial and error.

VR AND TELEPRESENCE

The concept of telepresence is closely associated to VR. Telepresence is the use of VR technology, especially a sophisticated robotic remote control system, to participate in events at a distant location. Applications of telepresence include working in extreme temperatures or atmospheric pressure and in perilous conditions hazardous to human life. Through telepresence, the users of a networked device can be part of the network as if they are located within the physical area of the network. Telepresence involves everything from conferencing to the use of video links.

Most telepresence functions are conducted with a complex robot (or *telechir*) operated and controlled from a distant location. Telemetry over wires, optical fibers, wireless links, or the Internet executes control and feedback. Robotic telepresence brings real-time human effectiveness, obviating the need for physical presence of a human being in that location. Telepresence has been used to defuse explosives, neutralize toxic substances, and monitor unsafe situations.

—Debashis "Deb" Aikat

See also Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC); Computer Use, Socialization and; Interactive Media; Interactivity

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W

WEBCAMS

A *webcam* (web camera or PC camera) is a low-priced digital video camera that is connected to an Internet computer and that, combined with software, enables online video communication. There are two ways in which webcams are most commonly used:

Videoconferencing (two-way webcams). People communicating in groups of two or more on the Internet via means such as instant messaging services, Internet telephony, and online chat rooms may enhance the process by adding live video imagery of themselves. This creates a two-way video-based process of communication that often also uses an audio channel and is similar to a face-to-face conversation.

One-way webcams. The typical way of using a webcam is for uploading images onto a Web server, continuously or at regular intervals. In this context, not only the actual video cameras but also the websites that feature the one-way imagery are referred to as webcams (or *live-cams*). By analogy to broadcasting, this process is called *webcasting* to emphasize the fact that image content is publicly distributed on the Web via webcams. The live webcam videos may be watched using Web browsers. This way of using webcams represents a one-way process of communication. Webcam operators, both individuals and organizations, provide live public video imagery for a large audience. The spectrum of topics and motifs is wide. One-way webcams usually do not transmit any sound.

The quality of the images transmitted by webcams is limited and depends on the recording conditions (e.g., lighting), the camera, the software, and the bandwidth of the Internet connection. In recent years, both the efficiency of PC cameras and the bandwidth of Internet connections have increased noticeably.

PREVALENCE OF WEBCAM USE

The U.S. marketing company, IDC, estimated that 18 million webcams were sold in the year 2004; the market leader for webcams is Logitech.

In a representative telephone inquiry among adult Internet users in the United States in 2003, 7% of those surveyed were operating a one-way webcam of their own. There are more than twice as many webcam viewers as active webcam operators. According to a Pew Internet and American Life Project survey conducted in 2005, one out of six adult Internet users in the United States (16%) had viewed webcam content. The male rate (19%) is slightly larger than the female rate (13%). Webcam viewing was equally popular in all parts of the population, independent of age, income, education, and number of offspring. Statistical data concerning webcam usage by children and adolescents is yet to be published.

WEBCAM CONTENT

In 1991, computer science students from Cambridge University launched the first webcam mentioned in the literature. It displayed images of a coffee pot shared by several academics in a laboratory, thus enabling them

to see on their computer desktops in their respective offices when the coffee had run through (as the laboratory was called the Trojan Room, this became known as the Trojan Room coffee pot).

The best-known webcam was the so-called JenniCam, begun in 1996 by 20-year-old college student Jennifer Ringley and operated until 2003. Jennifer equipped her apartment with several webcams and filmed her own private everyday life uncensored around the clock. The live imagery was initially available online without charge and was viewed and discussed in Internet forums by a large fan audience. The video imagery consisted of captured still images, updated once per minute. A membership fee was charged for more frequent updating of the images. Webcam operators' use of the domestic video monitoring model (home cam) may have several motives. Some are driven by the desire for attention and fame, by the urge to experiment with new technology, and by the prospect of financial benefits. The homecam concept has also been adopted as a TV format (e.g., in the reality show *Big Brother*).

Popularization of the Web in the mid-1990s brought along with it the adult entertainment industry's commercialization of webcam content. Fee-based live sex shows are transmitted via webcams, enabling viewers to communicate with the people in front of the cameras via live chatting facilities. Because webcams may be operated from private homes, a grey area of semi-professional sex providers has evolved in the field of sexcams. On the other hand, professional prostitutes welcome the fact that webcams allow them to work in a safer and more self-determined environment than the streets provide.

The spectrum of webcam content is even wider. One may label topic groups of webcams, such as trafficcams, weathercams, citycams, spacecams, petcams, peoplecams, and so on. Here, webcam operators may be commercial businesses (e.g., restaurants) and public institutions (e.g., research departments) as well as private individuals. Several online webcam directories display the variety of webcams available.

POSITIVE USES OF WEBCAMS

Webcams represent windows to the world, and, unlike TV imagery, webcam videos are uncut recordings of "real life." The webcam directory, earthcam.com, features a special section for children, enabling the observation of animals, landscapes, and urban and wildlife scenery. Other webcam directories also offer a variety of content that may be used in an educationally sensible way with parental guidance. What other chances might you have of spontaneously observing the moon or the South Pole or taking a close look at a stork's nest, a horse's stable, or a volcano? Webcams may be used in school education. Children and adolescents may acquire media competence by designing and implementing webcam projects themselves. Webcams can be integrated into the websites of schools as well as used for children's personal web pages.

DANGERS OF WEBCAMS

Webcams may result in children and adolescents being confronted with pornographic content inappropriate and unsuitable for their age. Even keywords like *webcam classroom* produce several sexcams in Google search results. Although sexcams are usually fee based and require a valid credit card number, there are usually extensive previews and trial versions available for underage Internet users.

A further risk is the possibility that children and adolescents may imprudently compromise their own privacy by identifying themselves while actively using one-way or two-way webcams. Even the privacy of relatives or friends passing by in front of the camera is endangered, as images from live webcams may be downloaded and distributed on the Web by other users. Webcams offer adolescents of both sexes the opportunity to gain attention, recruit fans, receive compliments and presents, and so on, but this opportunity may blur the boundaries between innocent use and virtual prostitution. Moreover, cases of college students installing webcams in dorms and publishing intimate images of fellow pupils on the Web have been reported. In addition to intentional misuse, lapses such as young users forgetting to turn off the webcam or third parties taking over control of the camera may cause serious problems. Teaching young users ethical standards and the appropriate technical information for safeguarding their own webcam is essential here.

The increasing surveillance of citizens by means of webcams in public spaces is a further serious sociopolitical issue. Passers-by are often identifiable on images of trafficcams. Webcams in public institutions such as prisons (jailcams) are controversial. Some political activists use webcam imagery (e.g., from abortion clinics or brothels) to pillory certain groups of people in public. On the other hand, webcams are

also used in child-care institutions to enable parents to observe their children at all times from their workplaces. Equipping schools with webcams is meant to document and prevent deviant behavior, although at the same time, it has an impact on privacy.

CONCLUSION

PC cameras are becoming more effective and more affordable, mobile phone cameras are more and more common, and the bandwidth of Internet connections is growing. The trend of visualization and *videographization* continues in online communication. It is all the more important to close the existing gaps in the research into webcam use by children and adolescents and to provide them with pedagogical help for a constructive active and passive use of webcams.

—Nicola Döring

See also Chat Rooms; Chat Rooms, Social and Linguistic Processes in; Computer Use in Schools; Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Age and; Internet Use, Positive Effects of; Personal Web Pages; Websites, Children's

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WEBSITES

Earthcam.com section for children: www.earthcamforkids.com

Online webcam directories: www.earthcam.com, www.camcentral.com, www.webcamsearch.com, www.worldlive.cz

WEBSITES, CHILDREN'S

Children become familiar and comfortable with technology, including Web pages, at very early ages. About 6% of children ages 5 to 7, 28% of children ages 8 to 10, and almost 50% of 11-to-14-year-olds are online, mostly to get help with homework and to enjoy chat rooms, entertainment, and playing games. They are online more then 45 minutes a day, with boys spending more time online than girls in each age group. In 2000, Internet access was available in 99% of American public schools. More than 50% of children have Internet access at home, and 60% of those are regular Internet users. This entry considers children as both consumers and producers of Web pages.

CHILDREN AS CONSUMERS

The World Wide Web is shrinking the world, connecting small groups with shared interests; this may be especially important for children who cannot easily meet new people on their own. Children can talk with others without sharing their name or where they live.

The Internet also provides access to consumer-oriented information for children who visit the websites of brands that interest them. According to Nielsen NetRatings, children prefer commercial sites such as

Diva Starz, Toon Town Online, Cartoon Network, Barbie, and Disney Channel. Boys tend to like search engines and sites about sports more than girls do, and girls prefer entertainment sites. Girls see the Web more as a communication medium than a place to get information, visiting sites such as AOL Instant Messenger, and websites for magazines, *YM* and *CosmoGirl.*

Such sites have advertising content tightly woven into the content; one example is the Disney website, which features famous characters, an online store, information about theme parks, and so on. Children younger than 5 years have trouble telling advertising apart from content. Children with less experience using the Web also may not be aware of the fact that their favorite sites are commercial sites; one study found that they thought the companies just wanted to provide entertainment on commercial sites. Children click on banner ads that seem to be part of the website content, especially if there are familiar characters in the advertisement.

Children have specific design preferences. They like to move the mouse around and explore the site, looking for things that are clickable. They want age-appropriate graphics, not pictures that look like they are for babies. They like sound effects and animations. Website usability expert Jakob Nielsen found that children were best able to use straightforward sites like amazon.com and yahoo.com, even though they are primarily designed for adults. However, many of the websites he studied that had been designed specifically for children were too complex and hard to navigate, with nonstandard interface design that made too few elements look clickable. Children's sites often mix content for adults and kids on the same page or require visitors to complete complex forms before they can see information, which makes them difficult for children to use.

CHILDREN AS PRODUCERS

Children like to see content created by other children, so including children in the design of websites may help increase their usage. The Web is an ideal publishing environment; children can freely publish photographs, text, and multimedia files. Many children create their own websites; one study found that 24% of children 12 to 17 years old have personal websites. In 2000, the Pew Research Center found that while 45% of teens are using the Internet, few had made any web pages, although girls were more likely to do this because they prefer to use the Internet for communication. The more experience children have online, the more complex sites they create; children without much previous Internet experience substitute what they have learned from their experience with other media and create linear sites similar to print magazines.

Homepages created by children can be seen as places for children to experiment with aspects of their identity. They can change the site to suit their mood or as they gain skill to create new content. However, children like to play with content created by others as a way of expressing their creativity rather than putting new original content on the Web. Girls especially like sites where they can personalize the information presented or where they can enter some information about themselves and get back customized reports.

CONCERNS

The online world for children is very commercialized. For example, toymaker Mattel established barbie.com and bratz.com to promote dolls. Each is designed to build brand loyalty through games and community features such as mailing pictures made on the site to friends, registering to see high scores on games, and using message boards. Children are attractive as consumers because they have large amounts of money to spend and are more easily swayed by advertising. Advertisements on web pages, a large part of the commercialization of the Web, are often appealing to children because of their entertainment value. Unlike advertisements on television, Web ads do not interrupt the flow of activities the child is engaged with on the website, and they can be easily accessed when the child clicks on them.

Many sites provide online forums where visitors can talk with each other; companies that provide such sites not only benefit from the increased traffic but also gain insight into children's interests, new slang, and trends. This raises concerns that such forums compromise children's privacy. In 1997, the Center for Media Education, a nonprofit advocacy group, found that 90% of child-oriented websites collected personal information, and none of the sites in the study had any mechanism in place for obtaining parental permission to collect that information. In the same year, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) began studying the issue and found that industry self-regulation was not working; neither for-profit companies nor nonprofit organizations were following the guidelines. They issued the *Report to Congress on Privacy Online* in June 1998, which recommended that Congress force companies to get parental permission before collecting

any identifying information from children. The Better Business Bureau established the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) to study websites targeting children. If CARU becomes aware of sites that are not complying with FTC guidelines, it reports those companies to the FTC (Bryant, 2004). The federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 2000 requires that websites for children have an understandable privacy policy available online. It also requires companies with such websites to get verifiable parental consent before any information is collected from children under 13 years old and to protect the confidentiality of the information that is collected. However, an FTC study in 2002 found that about half of the sites studied were still collecting information from children without parental consent.

—Kimberly S. Gregson

See also Advertising, Effects on Children of; Center for Media Education (CME); Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU); Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000 (CIPA); Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA); Federal Trade Commission; Internet Use, Rates and Purposes of

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WEBSITES

American Library Association list of "great websites for children," organized by school subjects such as literature and mathematics: http://www.ala.org/greatsites

Yahooligans!, a kid-friendly website maintained by Yahoo!, with news, games, a directory of websites, and resources for parents and teachers: http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/

WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) was established by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. The principal purpose of the ONDCP is to establish policies and objectives for the U.S. drug control program. The director of ONDCP, who is commonly referred to as the "drug czar," is in charge of the National Drug Control Strategy, which is used to direct the country's anti-drug efforts. In 1998, in the midst of an increase in crack cocaine use, the ONDCP launched the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign with the goal of preventing and reducing youth drug use as one component of its strategy.

Unprecedented in size and scope (by 2005, more than $1 billion had been allocated for the media campaign), the campaign produced and distributed anti-drug advertising and related information targeted to U.S. adolescents and their parents. The campaign developed the advertising in conjunction with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, and public relations materials in conjunction with large advertising and public relations firms such as BBDO Worldwide and Porter Novelli.

The campaign saw parents as an important target for anti-drug messages because research showed that many of the parents of teens in the early part of the 21st century had used marijuana when they were

adolescents and did not think it was very dangerous. One part of the campaign was designed to educate those parents that the marijuana their children were using was more potent than what they remembered, that marijuana use affects attention spans and impedes good decision making, and that it can lead to symptoms of depression and thoughts of suicide. In 2005, the seventh year of the campaign, ads running on television and in major print publications such as the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* also encouraged parents to "be the parent and set some rules . . . because dealing with an addicted child later is a whole lot scarier than hearing a few I-hate-you's now." The tag line was: ACTION: The Anti-drug. Parents were encouraged to learn more by calling an 800 number or visiting a comprehensive website called theantidrug .com, where they could access a number of publications designed to assist them in talking about and intervening in their child's drug use.

Critics contended from its outset that the campaign's anti-drug media campaign was misdirected at marijuana. They argued that other drugs, including some legal drugs such as cigarettes and alcohol, were used by more adolescents and resulted in more significant health problems than marijuana. Later in the campaign, an increase in use of methamphetamines among adolescents engendered another round of criticism that the focus on marijuana was ill advised. The campaign maintained that marijuana is a gateway drug that leads to use of other dangerous illegal drugs.

Although the campaign claimed that it had been successful in decreasing marijuana use and increasing anti-drug attitudes among adolescents, others claimed that marijuana use had remained remarkably steady over the course of the campaign.

—Jane D. Brown

See also Anti-Drug Media Campaigns

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WEBSITE

The Antidrug Campaign: http://www.theantidrug.com

WORLD SUMMITS ON CHILDREN AND TELEVISION

The World Summit Movement on Media for Children was conceived by Patricia Edgar, who recognized that television programming for children was changing and under threat in a variety of ways and that international efforts were needed if it was to survive with the values and objectives to which professionals in the industry aspire. In 1993, she began a process of discussions that led to the first World Summit on Television and Children, which was held in Melbourne, Australia, in March 1995 and hosted by the Australian Children's Television Foundation, where Edgar was the founding director.

The objectives of the World Summit on Media for Children were

- To achieve a greater understanding of developments in children's media around the world
- To raise the status of children's programming
- To draw to the attention of key players in broadcasting the importance of issues relating to children
- To agree on a charter of guiding principles in children's media
- To ensure the provision of programs for children will be guaranteed as the communications revolution proceeds
- To assist in the developing world to provide opportunities for quality children's programming in the future

The first summit was attended by 700 people from 72 countries. Both officially and informally, the summit provided an intense, exciting, and fertile environment for the exchange of ideas and information, and it acted as a catalyst for meetings and actions around the world.

The 2nd World Summit on Television for Children was held in London, England, in 1998, and the 3rd World Summit on Media for Children was held in Thessaloniki, Greece, in 2001. A variety of other regional summits and forums, inspired by the World Summits, have also been held since 1995 in the Philippines, Africa, and North America; they all belong to the World Summit movement. At the 3rd World Summit in Thessaloniki in March 2001, the Foundation Board conferred on Brazil the right to hold the 4th World Summit on Media for Children in Rio de Janeiro during 2004. That summit, attended by 3,000 people, was a seminal event for Brazil and Latin America. The 5th World Summit is to be held in South Africa in 2007.

In 1999, a company was established to foster the World Summit movement. The World Summit on Media for Children Foundation is a not-for-profit public company incorporated in Victoria, Australia. Its board of directors includes representatives of the principal host organizations of previous and future World Summits and regional summits. The board is responsible for overseeing the process by which specific countries and organizations are given the right to hold successive World Summits on Media for Children.

The foundation's objectives are to encourage and promote the World Summit, select host organizations for future World Summits, and assist those organizations to raise funds for and prepare for the World Summit. The foundation owns the intellectual property of the World Summit on Media for Children concept.

—Patricia Edgar

See also Computer Use, International; Entertainment-Education, International; International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth, and Media; Internet Use, International; Media Education, International

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WORLD WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT (WWE)

Scholars, parents, and social critics are becoming increasingly worried about children's exposure to professional wrestling programs, fearful that impressionable audiences will be adversely affected by violence, profanity, and sexual content that appears both in and out of the ring. World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), formerly known as the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) and currently the largest wrestling promoter in North America, has been the focus of this controversy.

BACKGROUND

WWE grappled its way into the American mainstream in the mid-1980s, when Chairman Vince McMahon reinvented pro wrestling as sports entertainment and garnered national attention for his company by emphasizing colorful superstars such as Hulk Hogan and star-studded super events such as *Wrestlemania.* WWE programming has maintained a national following ever since, despite a period of competition from Ted Turner's rival promotion, World Championship Wrestling (WCW). Although WCW became the most popular wrestling company for part of the 1990s, the WWE reclaimed its industry dominance by introducing edgier and more risqué content at the end of the decade, known as the "attitude" era among fans. During this time, controversial superstars such as the foul-mouthed, beer-swilling "Stone Cold" Steve Austin won the affection of WWE viewers and contributed to the eventual collapse of WCW. The WWE media reach now extends to monthly pay-per-view specials and two popular weekly television programs, WWE *Raw* and WWE *Smackdown.* These shows feature scripted wrestling matches set amid interviews, talk segments, and soap opera-esque plots involving both wrestling superstars and provocatively dressed women referred to as *divas.*

CONCERNS ABOUT YOUTHFUL VIEWERS

In 2001, WWE events drew an audience of more than 50 million Americans every week, while another 6.8 million purchased pay-per-view wrestling specials. Both weekly hours of WWE *Raw* rank in the top 10 across cable programming, drawing about 3 million viewers. Audience data from Nielsen in 2003 indicate that about 627,000 children a week watch *Raw,* and about 847,000 watch the WWE network show, *Smackdown.*

The large, young audience drawn in by WWE programming has led to substantial discourse over the potential negative consequences to them. Despite a lack of empirical research in the area, some social critics have argued that professional wrestling rewards and encourages violence that would otherwise be considered inappropriate or unjust in routine social interactions. Brendan Maguire suggests that acts considered deviant in other social settings are looked at as normative in wrestling and that the notion of behavior that deviates from an acceptable social norm is barely existent in professional wrestling. John Campbell has further posited that professional wrestling characters frequently vacillate between "face" and "heel" (good guys and bad guys), creating a scenario in which

identifying particular behaviors as deviant or nonnormative is almost impossible.

In addition to the unusual construction of aggression as normative, critics have expressed alarm at the simple frequency of violence in the wrestling genre. WWE programming has consistently ranked among the least-desirable shows for family viewing according to The Parents Television Council, which has labeled it too violent for family audiences. Wrestling has been further condemned for encouraging physical violence among young, impressionable viewers and for portraying violence with no regard for human dignity.

CONTENT RESEARCH

Although there is a paucity of scientific research specifically examining the content and effects of wrestling programming, a few important studies are worthy of mention. As concern over wrestling content grew during the "attitude" era of the late 1990s, a study conducted at Indiana University received mainstream media coverage on the news program, *Inside Edition.* This content analysis of 50 episodes of WWE *Raw* reported nearly 1,500 uses of the word *hell* or *ass,* more than 1,600 instances of lewd gesturing, and more than 600 incidents in which potentially deadly weapons such as tables and chairs were used in interpersonal violence. Content analyses of British television by Barrie Gunter and colleagues revealed that 6 of the 10 most violent programs were WWE shows, and a later report suggested that the two most violent individual programs on British television were WWE productions.

A content analysis by Ron Tamborini and colleagues further suggested that WWE programming contains far more violence than conventional programming. These researchers examined 36 hours of *Raw* and *Smackdown* episodes from 2002 and found that they present violence as morally just, likely to go unpunished, and devoid of realistic consequences such as extreme harm to the victim. Additional analyses of the Tamborini data set reveal further attributes that may be problematic. Other researchers have found that violence in professional wrestling tends to be out of proportion to the events provoking it, leading to an escalating spiral of violence in which routine social interactions become bloodbaths in a very short amount of time. Studies also show that wrestling programs contain an extraordinary amount of verbal aggression (typically character and competence attacks) enacted primarily for the sake of amusement.

BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

Concerns about the programs have been heightened by research in this area indicating that young children are more likely than adults or adolescents to perceive wrestling as realistic. Because realism strengthens the potential of television violence to increase viewer aggression, initial indications that young children are watching and likely to perceive the violence as real make it important to learn more not only about the manner in which wrestling violence is portrayed but also about its impact on impressionable young audiences in terms of attitudes toward aggression and aggressive behavior.

Scattered empirical research on televised wrestling has examined gender differences in motivations for viewing, self-reports of behavioral imitation, and perceptions of wrestling realism among young children, adolescents, and adults. In two separate studies, Dafna Lemish reported that male children and adolescents frequently imitate fighting techniques used in professional wrestling and that more than half of a sample of elementary schools principals report dealing at least once a week with schoolyard fights involving children imitating wrestling. A report by the British Broadcasting Standards Commission also indicates that many younger children are unaware of the scripted nature of professional wrestling and believe the action to be real. Despite the alarming results of these studies, little if any additional empirical research has examined the impact of wrestling entertainment on children and adolescents. Although a sizable amount of social criticism has been levied against the genre, more scientific research is needed to substantiate these concerns.

—Kenneth A. Lachlan and Paul D. Skalski

See also Aggression, Television and; Sports Television; Violence, Experimental Studies of

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Y

YOUTH CULTURE

Popular culture includes aspects of daily life that are not considered academic or fine arts. It may be bold and colorful, or raunchy, or comforting and familiar like Mickey Mouse. Popular culture often overlaps with youth culture; one of the best examples is the *Harry Potter* series, which is read by adults, teens, and children. Typical features of youth culture include being edgy, having profane content (such as the humor of the children in *South Park*), and being off-beat and "weird."

One way to understand youth culture is through media. Buckingham (2002) refers to the "electronic generation" when discussing the use of the Internet by children and teens, but that term seems to be equally applicable to both traditional and new media use because of the vast amounts of media consumed daily by modern youth. Media are used more than 6.5 hours a day, and exposure is even higher because children and teens tend to use more than one medium at the same time (i.e., they may listen to CDs while playing video games). A 2003–2004 study of children's and teens' media habits conducted for the Kaiser Family Foundation found that more than 95% have televisions, VCRs, and CD players, 80% have cable television and video games, and more than 70% have access to the Internet at home. That media world is expanding with the introduction of devices such as personal video recorders (TiVo) and portable DVD players, Internet access through video game consoles, downloadable ring tones for cell phones, and video content on cell phones and iPODs.

Network television, especially the WB, UPN, and Fox, target their programming to reach adolescents. Networks promote young teenage stars such as Lindsay Lohan, to appeal to teenagers. In 2004, the most popular show among both boys and girls was *American Idol* on Fox, and girls liked *The OC*. On UPN, girls liked *America's Next Top Model,* while boys liked the afternoon anime programs *Pokémon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh* on the WB. Some programs, including *The Simpsons* and *Malcolm in the Middle,* were enjoyed by all teenagers, regardless of race or gender. However, different racial groups identified different favorite programs. Black teens preferred programs with African Americans in major roles, such as *The Parkers, The Hughleys*, and *Moesha.* White teens liked 7th *Heaven* and *Survivor.*

The Internet is a big part of youth culture. Teens, tweens, and children have grown up with the Internet and are accustomed to using it for information and entertainment as well as communicating with friends. They create content on the Internet as well as consume content created by others. Personal homepages can reflect the owner's personality and interests, with images of movie stars and favorite bands, along with stories and poems and diary entries written by the owners. The webpage can be changed as often as owners like to reflect changing interests or as they want to change the aspects of their identity that they share with others. Sites like MySpace.com, recently purchased by News Corp., cultivate community and sense of belonging with photos, homepages, and friends lists. A long list of friends has become a status symbol among the 26 million registered MySpace users. Facebook.com has similar communication features

specifically for high school and college students. Users create the content on these sites and so control the culture, rather than being limited by cultural options offered by large media companies.

Children and teens both use instant messaging (IM) to quickly communicate with friends. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2005, 48% of teens surveyed use IM daily, and 30% use it several times a day. Teens use IM to keep in touch with their friends in other cities and to coordinate their schedules, talk over homework, and chat with many people at once. They can communicate privately without parental supervision, trying out various aspects of identity and talking with members of the opposite sex in a more normal setting. To speed up the conversation, users create abbreviations and slang, so that even if parents were to see messages, the messages would be almost impossible to understand. This writing style helps users feel part of a culture separate from their parents.

One aspect of media-focused youth culture that has spread from young children to older teens is animation. Cartoons let the viewers escape the rules of the everyday (adult) world. The cartoon world is creative and childlike, with talking animals and over-the-top violence. Cartoons are no longer just Saturday morning programs for children. *The Simpsons* has been on the air since the early 1990s on the Fox network. *South Park,* on the cable network Comedy Central and syndicated on network television, has been on the air since 1997. These cartoons tell stories about family life from the perspective of the children. What makes cartoons like *South Park* and *The Simpsons* popular is the power the children have; they are able to solve problems caused by their parents. Animation is popular on the Internet, as well; youth send the online addresses of interesting new animations to their friends. One site in particular draws a large weekly audience: HomestarRunner.com features animated shorts, including the most popular feature, the fan mail answered by a character named StrongBad.

Another interesting part of youth culture is video games; in fact, the Entertainment Software Association estimates that 50% of all Americans play some form of video game, and 35% of game players are under the age of 18. Like cartoons, these games let players inhabit a fantasy world where they have the power to save the planet or to fly into outer space and battle aliens. Players get to break everyday rules with no real-world consequences. Boys and young males watch less television to make time to play PC and console-based video games. Girls and young women play casual games on the Internet. Not everyone is happy about the popularity of video games, believing that virtual activity has replaced real-world outdoor play. However, a new area of video games has gained popularity—exertainment, games that combine entertainment and exercise. Popular examples are *Dance Dance Revolution* and *Mojo!;* the latter uses a small camera and a PlayStation console.

Not all media are electronic and interactive. Comic books appeared during the Depression and were one of the first attempts to market directly to children and teens instead of to parents. The stories were violent, and authority figures, such as the police, were portrayed as corrupt and ineffective, just as they are in many video games and television programs popular with youth today. During World War II, superheroes such as Captain America were popular, not just with children but also with soldiers who needed lightweight portable entertainment. Comics were blamed for the increase in juvenile delinquency and violent youth crime. Adults reacted with alarm to a youth culture they did not understand. There were calls from parent groups for censorship and state regulation of the industry, again a direct parallel to calls for censorship of video game content.

The interest in comics continues today. One category of comics seeing high sales is manga, serialized graphic novels from Japan. This is a rapidly growing area of the publishing industry, which now has series available for all ages. Sales of manga titles have been doubling for several years, and in 2006, most of the best-selling titles in the publishing industry's graphic novel category were manga titles. Manga have been available in the United States for 20 years; however, they have exploded in popularity in the last few years with the increase in interest in series such as *Full Metal Alchemist* and *Naruto*, two examples of *shonen* or manga for boys. Both are in the top 20 positions of the graphic novel BookScan list, the publishing industry's best-selling titles list. A large part of the audience for manga is young girls buying *shoujo,* or manga for girls; typical examples include *Fruits Basket* and *Fushigi Yugi.* Even American publishers are getting into the manga business; Archie Comics will release *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* with manga-style drawings.

Mainstream youth culture in music, fashion, and even sports is driven by the preferences of African American youth, who are a key part of the urban

market. Hip hop music is popular with teens of all races, as are urban street slang and fashions by designers such as music industry leaders Jay-Z and P. Diddy. Part of the popularity of urban culture involves signaling membership in a culture that seems more real than the one created by big media companies. Once a slang term gets used (and overused) by mainstream media, it loses popularity among youth, who do not want to be part of the mainstream culture.

Teenage Research Unlimited estimates that teens have almost $170 billion available in disposable income. Youth are sought after as consumers because they are open to trying new products and brands; they want to be trendsetters, and once they find something they like, they can be very loyal consumers. Teens get clues about popular brands and styles from the media and celebrities. Sports stars are effective role models in advertising; girls are more likely than boys to say positive things about a product or a brand because their favorite athletic star is featured in an advertisement. Marketers prefer age-segmented media, such as animation blocks and age-targeted programming blocks, because such programming helps them pitch their products to the right audience. Marketers also engage teens and tweens in word-of-mouth programs in which they promote products to their friends. Marketers even talk of the "nag factor" in which they see children persistently encouraging their parents to buy something, pestering until they get what they want. Companies hold focus groups and conduct surveys to determine trends and shopping habits. Some companies lose credibility with youth when they use outdated terms and images that are no longer a part of youth culture. Companies may need to advertise outside traditional media to seem credible to youth. The Toyota Scion is not advertised in any mainstream magazines; research on the media use habits of the targeted audience for this car found that they do not read traditional magazines, not even traditional car buff magazines. Toyota spent $12.2 in magazine advertisements in 2004, but mainly in nontraditional magazines.

Many adults believe that compared with children in the past, today's youth have little respect for their elders and no strong sense of right or wrong; young people are seen as materialistic and selfish. Adults form many of their impressions on the basis of images in the media rather than contact with actual teenagers. Media coverage stresses problems faced or caused by youth, trivializes academic accomplishments, and overemphasizes sporting achievements. It also may show youth as having fun and getting out of control. However, the real-world facts do not support the media's negative view; youth crime is down, as is drug and alcohol use. Youth may need to take more control of creating representations of their culture online and in traditional media. That culture may be raunchy and edgy, but it can also be very honest and hopeful.

—Kimberly S. Gregson

See also Advertising, Exposure to; Advertising, Market Size and; Electronic Games, Types of; Hip Hop, Youth Culture and; Instant Messaging; Internet Use, Social; Manga (Japanese Comic Books); Media Exposure; Television, Motivations for Viewing of

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Z

ZINES

Although they are extremely diverse in form and content and thus quite resistant to generalization, *zines* are typically defined as magazines handmade by an individual or small group of people as a hobby or avocation. Unlike the "slick" (i.e., professional, technically enhanced, big budget) magazines produced by the commercial publishing industry, zines typically are created at home and thus are independent from professional presses and commercial publishers. The roots of contemporary zines often are traced back only as far as the punk fanzines of the late 1970s; yet, similar self-publications have a longer and more complex history in a variety of subcultural groups, including science fiction fans of the late 1930s, the Beat poets of the 1950s, and the underground press of the 1960s and 1970s.

Most contemporary zine makers, popularly known as *zinesters,* are teenagers and young adults who feel alienated from dominant society and commercial culture. The earliest zine producers were typically white, middle-class males; however, an increasing number of girls and people of color have become involved in zine making since the late 1980s. Because paper and writing implements are inexpensive as well as easy to access, manipulate, and transport, zines remain the media texts most easily and cheaply produced by young people. In turn, because zine production requires minimal literacy and zine makers champion amateur aesthetics, zines are an attractive alternative medium for those with minimal education and publishing skills.

The disparate communities in which zines are made and consumed today have led to a wide variety of zine genres, including: *fanzines* (created by fans of a particular cultural medium or genre, such as music or sports); *community/"scene" zines* (e.g., punks, feminists); *topic/issue zines* (e.g., work, conspiracy theories); *literary zines* (poetry, short fiction, science fiction); and *comix* (underground comic books). *Personal zines* (or *perzines*) are created by one individual and composed primarily of written text and illustrations reflecting personal experiences and opinions.

In keeping with the anti-industrial, anti-commercial ethos of countercultural production, which privileges authentic expression, zines are typically created via relatively inexpensive and unsophisticated means: handwritten or typewritten text, hand-drawn illustrations, and photocopied text and images appropriated from commercial media texts. With the increased availability of personal computers, as well as word processing and desktop publishing software, an increasing number of zine producers are using digital technologies to typeset and lay out their material. Nevertheless, these electronically technologized practices are often frowned on by zinesters interested in steering clear of the corporate, industrial sector of culture and expressing themselves as authentically as possible. Zines typically carry no paid advertisements, although they often promote other zines and handmade products.

The independent "Do It Yourself" (DIY) ethos privileged by zinesters has important connections to the anti-industrial, anti-capitalist practice known in France as *la perruque,* wherein cultural producers use

office time, equipment, and supplies to create, reproduce, and distribute their texts. In addition to "scamming" the means of zine production from their places of work and photocopy businesses, zinesters freely appropriate text and images mass-produced by the commercial media industries, refusing to adhere to laws protecting intellectual and artistic property. Such text and images are rarely reproduced in their original forms, however, as zine makers deconstruct and reassemble such materials to produce new meanings. To avoid criminal prosecution and censorship for such practices, many zinesters do not reveal their real identities and use nicknames by which they are known in the zine community, thus attesting to the performance nature of this culture. Zine makers also protect their identity and limit outside interference by using post office boxes instead of home addresses, by changing the titles of their zines, and by accepting only untraceable capital as payment, such as cash and stamps. As these alternative and often illegal practices suggest, zine making affords young people an opportunity to rebel against dominant social institutions and to explore counterhegemonic identities and alternative cultural economies.

In contrast with mass-produced periodicals, zines appear irregularly, their creators waiting either for good copy and artwork to publish or, more typically, for enough capital and time to compile and print the next issue. Often, zines are produced as "one-offs," singular creations by an individual who, for whatever reason, does not or cannot produce other issues. Most one-off and first-issue zines are printed in small quantities due to their producers' lack of capital or uncertainty about readers' interest in their work. Those zinesters who are committed to the zine community and to creating alternative forms of culture usually produce multiple issues of a zine and develop a subscription list that requires a larger number of reproductions. Nonetheless, even zines created by more committed individuals are rarely the same in form and content from issue to issue; therefore, a single issue of a zine cannot be considered representative of a zinester's *oeuvre.* Unlike most commercial magazines, which rely on formulaic rhetoric and layout practices, zines typically have no table of contents, departments or sections, or page numbers structuring their material.

Zines are typically sold or traded at cultural events, such as musical shows; however, an increasing number of zines can be purchased at independent book and music stores, as well as through online distribution companies known as *distros.* Because many zinesters often produce only one issue of their zine, reproduce their zine in small quantities, fail to keep master copies of their work, or move after their zine's initial distribution, it is quite difficult to locate back issues of most zines. Thus, although new zines continually enter the alternate media economy, just as many other zines cease being reproduced, making a zine collector's or critic's job all the more difficult and frustrating. Fortunately, several zine directories exist today in both paper and electronic form (e.g., *Factsheet Five*), which makes locating such texts and their producers easier than in the past.

—Mary Kearney

See also Magazines, Adolescent Boys'; Magazines, Adolescent Girls'; Personal Web Pages

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