

- Among other findings, **business news is growing negative:** 77% feel tv & radio are more negative than 10 yrs ago; 69% say the same about newspapers & mags. Overall, 75% feel business news coverage does not usually show business in a positive light.
- While some execs still clamor for a chance to meet the press, **59% say they are reluctant** to speak to a radio or tv reporter, 40% would shy away from an interview with a newspaper or mag.

Journalists constantly complain that organizations won't cooperate. Very often cooperating is suicidal, given this lack of objectivity. It's easy to see why the best strategy increasingly is to run your business under the radar of prurient, self-serving media intervention. Instead, why not build direct relationships & communications with opinion leaders & key publics? (More from Brouillard Communications, 420 Lexington Ave, NYC 10170; 212/210-8656)

ONE MORE BLOW TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADVERTISING

New device called Commercial Brake attaches to your tv or VCR & blips out commercials. With the number of people watching favored programs by taping them rising steadily -- and predicted to be the mode of future viewing in the world of 500 channels -- this could eliminate a substantial percentage of the ad audience.

Arista Technologies, device developer, says you'll see a soft blue screen on your tv for 5 or 10 seconds while commercials air, then back to the show. Device will be available in early June for around \$200. Backers believe VCR owners will buy. Some fallout:

1. **Advertisers are unhappy** with the prospect of losing audience on playback of tv programs. Ingenuous response from Advertising Council: "What about public service announcements. We're going to lose some really, really important messages that way." But PSAs are only a small fraction of the whole... & often of dubious effectiveness.
2. **But viewers will love it.** A more genuine response comes from Nat'l Ass'n of Broadcasters which points out that tv shows are entirely supported by adv'g. "You can bet that advertisers won't be happy about it. On the other hand, a lot of consumers would be happy."

SURVEY REVEALS HOTTEST ISSUES, SPEAKERS & COMPANIES

Of 120 top business forums surveyed by the Public Affairs Group, 40 responded to identify the 5 major public policy issues speakers must focus on in '94: 1) healthcare, 2) international trade, 3) technology, 4) finance & investment, 5) crime.

Most requested speakers, in order of preference, are 1) Bill Gates/Microsoft, 2) Andy Grove/Intel, 3) Ted Turner/Turner Broadcasting, 4) Summer Redstone/Viacom, 5) Jack Welch/General Electric. Companies that generate the most interest/fill the most seats are: 1) Microsoft, 2) Intel, 3) Disney, 4) General Electric, 5) General Motors. (More info, 1-800-466-SPKR)

YOU MAY NOT BE READY FOR THIS, BUT HERE'S A NOW OR NEVER CHANCE TO SAFEGUARD INFO HIGHWAY

The information superhighway will impact all practitioners -- and their publics. **Only now, while it's being built,** can we have the opportunity to influence it...to have some say in how it will affect us.

"The emerging information infrastructure will affect our civilization as deeply as did Gutenberg's printing press. Properly implemented, this new printing press can offer as yet unimagined opportunities" for:

- personal communications
- building & revitalizing communities
- developing vast markets for information entrepreneurs
- benefiting workers by matching their work demands to their lifestyle needs through telecommuting
- helping business work more efficiently, realizing global competitive advantage.

"And if the infrastructure is truly extended to all parts of the country, rural businesses can compete in markets previously closed to them," explains the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Formed in 1990, EFF along with a coalition of public interest groups & private industry is **advocating "equitable access for all."** This year, it wants to update the 1934 Communications Act to include:

1. **Diversity of information sources:** Promoting a fully interactive infrastructure in which the First Amendment flourishes, allowing the greatest possible diversity of view points. "None of the interactive services promised, or the diversity hoped for, will be possible with an eight lane data superhighway rushing one-way into the home & only a narrow footpath running out."
2. **Universal service:** Advocating Open Platform services -- ensuring a minimum level of affordable info, widely available, open to all without discrimination, the on-ramp for the nation's growing data superhighway.
3. **Free speech & common carriage:** Guaranteeing infrastructure access regardless of the content of the message the user is sending.
4. **Privacy:** Protecting the security & privacy of all communications carried over the infrastructure, & safeguarding 4th & 5th Amendment rights.



DANGEROUS GOV'T INTERFERENCE?

Cryptography -- technology which allows encoding & decoding of messages -- is essential for privacy. "On Feb 4, the Administration announced its plans to proceed on every front to make the Clipper Chip encryption scheme a national standard, & to discourage the development & sale of alternative powerful encryption technologies.... The government's Clipper Chip initiative is designed to set an encryption standard where the government holds the keys to our private conversations." EFF is fighting this in the policy arena.

5. **Development of public interest applications & services** which are not produced by the commercial market -- making them widely available & affordable. "In the long run, it will not be hundreds of channels or lines of video servers that promote diversity. It will be the ability for all participants in the national & international information infrastructure to be content producers as well as content consumers."

PARTICIPATIVE PUBLIC DESIGN vs. MONOPOLIES: OUR CHOICE

- "Today, the early adopters of the information infrastructure -- those who use Internet, CompuServe, America Online, Prodigy & the over 50,000 computer bulletin board systems -- rely on **personal computers** as their primary access tool.
- Tomorrow, most will depend on a **consumer 'information appliance'** -- likely to be an outgrowth of the current cable television set-top channel selector. Instead of just selecting channels, it will control access to a wealth of interactive services.
- To meet a diversity of user needs, it is critical that these intelligent set-top boxes (which are really multimedia computers) are **designed according to open standards**. As in the personal computer industry, open standards will lead to a flourishing of innovative applications. Closed standards, however, will give network operators the ability to stifle the development of new applications, to the detriment of consumers."

(More info from EFF, 1001 G St, NW, DC 20001; 202/347-5400, fax 202/393-5509; Internet eff@eff.org)

HANDLING CRISIS OFTEN MEANS INVOLVING LOCAL GOV'T

Ku Klux Klan. Find them in your town (or in your organization) & you have a crisis that's laden with intense emotions on all sides -- exacerbated by media attention. Town manager George Olson offers lessons learned when the Klan visited prr's hometown of Exeter. It is a guide to how practitioners can work with local gov't when their organizations confront today's incendiary issues:

1. **Keep your cool** & remind yourself that government's role in these matters is very limited. Everyone will want something done & want it done now. Nobody wants to think about the ramifications of their actions when action is so clearly needed because you are face to face with the Klan & everything it represents.
2. **Get all the legal help** you can.
3. **Get ready for the media blitz**. Appoint a spokesperson. Nobody else in town government is to speak on the issue. This way, the town speaks with one voice.
4. **Do something positive**. Be proactive in some way. You're not going to get away without doing something in the face of the Klan, even if government's role is limited by the First Amendment. Exeter board of selectmen debated & voted unanimously to issue a statement praising the cultural, ethnic & racial diversity of the community, & sent it to all the media in the area. Not much in terms of substance, but important.
5. **Do whatever you can behind the scenes to encourage residents to funnel their frustrations into positive action**. The Klan thrives where violence is the response to its activity. Klansmen are trained to solicit violence against themselves, since it is this violence that helps to get their message out, proves their point & generates support. Don't even think of going face to face with them: they know how to make you just as mindless as they are.
6. **Make sure police & public safety personnel are trained** to deal with hate groups. You will be surprised at the amount of opposition that exists to the Klan, &, unfortunately, with this opposition comes violence against the Klan.
7. **Keep your door open all the time when times are at their hottest** -- serving as a release & sounding board for frustrated citizens. Hate groups, like the Klan, thrive most when people don't talk out their concerns & fears.

MEDIA OBJECTIVITY RATINGS BOOST UNDER RADAR STRATEGY

In a new study, senior execs rate media on the objectivity of their media coverage:

Medium	% Execs Calling This Medium Highly or Somewhat Objective
Industry trade pub'ns	75%
National daily newspapers	60
General news mags (eg, Time, Newsweek)	56
Local newspapers	37
Local radio prgms	33
National radio prgms	33
National tv news	28
Local tv news	24
TV "news magazines" (eg, 20/20, 60 Minutes)	13%