

¶Tv nets went before FCC in Nov. to urge approval for teletext or similar system. Chmn. Charles Ferris assured them agency encourages development. Expert Kenneth Edwards (U. of Ala.) believes possibility of developing large ad revenues for system are good. He feels print media are worried.

¶Mel Goldberg of ABC told AAPOR work in UHF technology could expand number of tv channels available. (See prr 1/30/78).

¶U.S. Dept. of Justice has intervened in Postal Service proposal for electronic mail due to "significant competition issues" raised. Justice supports FCC move to greatly reduce prices networks pay for relays via satellite.

¶Newspaper Ad Bureau urges publishers to develop alternative delivery systems to distribute "undailies" such as weekly papers, shoppers, penny savers, books, records, ad inserts.

¶Suit by Universal Studios & Walt Disney Productions against Sony, charging taping & replaying of tv programs is copyright infringement, could have major impact on future of video cassette recorder.

¶Development of three award-winning computer languages for non-experts -- Samantha, Upgrade, Focus -- should help overcome criticism computing is too complex for average citizen, stimulate interest in viewdata, personal computers, related technology.

¶Van Deerlin Bill to rewrite Communications Act of '34 will get intense debate. Broadcasting industry is fighting hard against it to keep out competition. US Catholic Conference wants "fourth network," public broadcasting, to be assigned new responsibilities. Dept. of Justice favors deregulatory aspects. AT&T, ITT deeply involved.

NEW MEDIA SAMPLER

Example of smaller, segmented medium for special audience is quarterly New Brooklyn. Gives borough long in shadow of Manhattan own voice following demise of Brooklyn Eagle in '59. McCall's, once flashiest mass mag success, illustrates how it stays successful by moving with market. On spine & content page, but not cover, it dubs self "the magazine for suburban women." Media specialization can serve anyone.

PBS pushes ahead with closed captioning units for deaf, due out late '79 following authorization by FCC. Units will print across screen dialog deaf viewers cannot hear. Like libraries' talking books, project will bring disadvantaged audience into mainstream.

Gannett-Combined Comms merger will create very special local medium when WHEC-TV (Rochester, NY) is sold to meet FCC rules. Will be first VHF network-affiliated tv station owned by black-controlled company.

Potential of rifle-shot media is seen in 18-30 age group, which Marbut reports spends more time reading magazines than watching tv.

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A PR REPORTER SPECIAL REPORT:

TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY PROMOTE RISE OF PERSONALIZED MEDIA OFFERING INFORMATION TO ERODE CONTROL OF MONOPOLY MEDIA EMPHASIZING ENTERTAINMENT; IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS WILL COME INTO FOCUS DURING 1979

"The microprocessing revolution is equivalent to the industrial revolution," believes John Naisbitt of Center for Policy Process (D.C.). "Americans have an appetite for information," says tv newsman John Chancellor.

Chancellor's Law: new forms of information-passing don't drive out old, merely change them. For instance, books still important, even booming; tv didn't kill radio. Effect of better info systems is to let people use time differently. To do this, people must control media, not be controlled by them.

Two factors are bringing this about. Technology is moving toward instant recall of data, entertainment, education anytime viewer desires. Economically this is possible because investment has shifted to audience (for equipment), whereas before it was in the hands of medium. Newspaper plant, for instance, costs millions while reader buys copy for pennies. "Radio and television have had to be built upon entertainment, with information and education being squeezed onto the schedules," researcher Anthony Smith notes.

Second factor: shift from self-denial ethic to self. Fitness & jogging, self-fulfillment cults, even change from barbers to hair stylists express this, says Robert Marbut, pres. Harte-Hanks Comms. (San Antonio). So does search for religion, adds futurist Willis Harman. "More people want more information -- but it's not the same information," Marbut told PRSA Institute. Today's info market is personalized, fragmented. As result, "mass media are on the way out." Readers are "less loyal, more demanding, selective, occasional."

Recent study, "The Home Terminal" by Int'l Resource Development (New Canaan, Ct.) concludes power of tv networks will "significantly decline" in next 10 yrs as access to viewers becomes more diffuse. Marshall McLuhan's electronic village is near, allowing everyone to customize everything all the time. Irony: that impersonal monster, the computer, is what makes such individualizing possible!

NEWSPAPERS AS WE KNOW THEM WILL DISAPPEAR, EXPERTS PREDICT

"Information consumers" care not what medium "information provider" uses, since all media are in information business. Marbut says this won't destroy newspapers, but will shift role & probably reduce circulations -- just as mass circulation magazines gave way to smaller, special interest publications.

Prototype is Louisville Courier-Journal & Times' "tailored" newspaper. Subscribers receive core section containing general news, can order variety of special sections

which come with it. From million words of news in computer language now discarded weekly, special sections are typeset at touch of button. Publisher Barry Bingham, Jr., says goal is to deliver each subscriber what s/he wants, less of what they don't read. Also has separate Saturday paper: a daily publishing a weekly. Ultimately, material will go straight from newspaper's VDT to tv sets in home. Economics will dictate due to savings in newsprint, energy, transportation.

Bingham sees this freeing public from media monopolies. "Anyone can become a publisher." Only advantages of existing papers will be reputation, reader loyalty, skilled news staff, morgues. Deregulation of broadcast media (except engineering aspects) is required, he feels. Otherwise electronically-distributed newspapers would fall under fairness, equal time requirements.

PR TECHNIQUES ALREADY EVOLVED
FOR WORKING WITHOUT MASS MEDIA

97% of U.S. dailies are monopolies. Chains own 59% of dailies with 71% of readership. Item: Combined Comms (2 dailies, 7 tv & 12 radio stations, outdoor advertising) plans merger with Gannett (77 dailies). In Canada, France, situation is even more monopolistic. One right-wing ex-Nazi collaborator controls 4 of 5 Paris dailies, Parade reports. While broadcast has always been basically entertainment, print media have moved strongly in that direction. Arts, living, similar sections or articles predominate in newspapers. Personality stories, with accent on celebrities, are trend in magazines, wrote Amelia Lobsenz in 11/6 t&t.

Public relations response has often been to set up alternative communications methods. NYC employment agencies hired counsel to reach employers, job-hunters during recent newspaper strike. Jules Witcover tells of Nixon comms dir Herb Klein's success in overcoming expertise of large media, which reported Nixon negatively. Klein worked with editors of small town media -- "soft underbelly of American journalism" -- for successful end run.

Internal communications emphasis is partly response to mass media's inability or refusal to cover business, institutional news & views. Managers realized employees constitute highly credible communications medium. Though recent study suggests execs haven't realized potential beyond such problem solving (pr 12/18), IABC claims oldtime house organ has diversified into explosion of sophisticated media types dealing with real issues (pr 9/18).

Major alternative is rise of personal media: face-to-face sharing of ideas built on personal relationships. During '78 Texaco's investor rels program began stressing personal contact. Employee recruitment plans offered incentives for present workers to speak personally to friends or to network in community. GM continued its Civic Leaders meetings. Lobbying -- major personal medium -- continued to grow in importance. "There's nothing like personal contact," advised 7/17 t&t on lobbying. Census Bureau found conversations their second most effective vehicle, after newspapers, for informing public.

IMPLICATIONS OF MEDIA REVOLUTION
FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. Deregulating tv, or cable, or teletext will make television like radio -- an essentially local medium serving local audiences. Adding diversity of this kind will destroy networks, Karl Meyer believes.

2. Will word processing make individually typed letters suspect as mass-produced? Because machines can turn out letters so fast, will they pollute channels of communication with unwieldy volume? Even personal correspondence is coming under attack.

3. Revolution may reach newsletters within four years, George Lutjen of McGraw-Hill estimates. Result will be newswires -- data teletyped into side-band FM radio-actuated teleprinters on subscribers' desks. Cuts production costs, ends reliance on post office.

4. To meet info explosion, tv news may become 24-hr operation available on all channels, Chancellor thinks. He agrees new tech will fragment tv into specialized audiences just as tv did to radio & mags.

5. Modern electronic writing requires better journalistic product, cautions Business Wire. E.g., some editors judge stories by abstract printouts, which may be first 30 words. Overlong leads, or those with key facts buried, will not see print. AP/UPI style is requisite.

BACKWARD LOOK: COMMUNITY RELATIONS RIVALED GOV'T REGS IN '78

pr said last Jan. 2 "a broad-based campaign against regulation is shaping up as the public affairs issue of 1978, as economic education was in '77." Two events verify this did occur. Opinion Research Corp. held briefing last month to reveal that by 2 to 1 margin public now feels less regulation is needed. Respondents to 14th Annual Survey of the Profession rated regulation/gov't rels year's most pressing problem, with 1 in 5 so stating.

For dramatic occurrences, however, rediscovered interest in community relations surpassed other '78 issues. pr reported on the following in last few months: Impact of city-formed block clubs in Grand Rapids, Mich., neighborhood groups in Sun Belt, Renaissance Center & midtown mall in Detroit (6/17) ... PRSA Institute discusses "The Unheavenly City," with presentations by Toronto mayor, others (7/24) ... Sierra Club takes up urban issues (7/31) ... Banks do turnaround, support recycling of buildings, neighborhoods (8/14) ... Grand Central Terminal case decided, several other reviewed (9/4) ... 5th annual Back to the City Conference scheduled (9/18) ... Community "health motivation" undertaken by hospitals (10/2) ... Municipalities themselves add pr staff, hire counsel (10/9) ... GM announces \$20 million urban revitalization project (10/16) ... study finds rising community involvement for hospitals & their trustees (11/6) ... Neighborhood Response Program launched by insurance industry (12/18).

ACTION DURING '79 WILL
REVEAL WHERE WE'RE HEADED

The technology, economics may be forcing them together, "tube and type are natural enemies like dog and cat," claims Saturday Review tv critic Karl Meyer. For instance, network evening news contributed to downfall of pm newspapers. Chicago Daily News was 6th largest daily in US yet it quit last March despite 327,000 circulation. Bingham notes advent of tv caused decline in reading of newspapers. Avg. 36 mins daily are now devoted to his papers, down from 48 mins decade ago. Indications: