

ACCESSIBILITY OF MEDIA

PRIMER QUESTIONS

1. How accessible is television where you are living? How about cable television and satellite television? How about digital television?
2. How accessible is radio where you are living? How about satellite radio? What is the approximate proportion of public television compared to private television? What about the approximate proportion of public radio compared to private radio?
3. How accessible are newspapers where you are living? What shops or vendors normally sell newspapers? Which newspapers can you receive where you are living?
4. How accessible is the internet where you are living? Can you easily access the internet in your home? Can you easily access the internet outside of your home?

Think about the selection of newspapers, radio frequencies, television channels, and internet technologies that you regularly come into contact with during your daily routines. Now think about which of those media are easy to access because they are convenient or inexpensive or readily available. Now think about which newspapers, television channels, radio frequencies, or internet technologies are hard to access because they are inconvenient or expensive or scarcely available. Now think about the television programs, radio programs, newspapers, and the internet web sites that you know exist, but cannot access because they simply are not available where you live. Finally, try to think about unfamiliar types of newspapers, radio programs, television shows, and web sites that may exist out there—somewhere. That last kind of thinking is especially challenging because it requires you to imagine media outlets that possibly exist, but at present are outside of your known media experiences.

Putting all of these lines of thinking together raises some basic questions about the access you have to media in your local environment, namely: What kinds of media surround you? What kinds of media do you come into contact with during your daily routines? What kinds of media are easy to access without going out of your way, or without having to pay a lot of money you really cannot afford? What kinds of media are virtually impossible to access because the economy and/or the infrastructure in the country is too underdeveloped (as discussed in Chapter 5, Philosophies for Media Systems)? These questions will help you assess the accessibility of media at your particular location. When you combine that knowledge with additional, more comprehensive information about the accessibility of media at other locations across the world, you can gain insight into just how varied the media choices really are where you are living.

In other words, studying the accessibility of media initiates an understanding of the range of media content to which people are exposed, by revealing the limitations and the possibilities of the selection of media choices available in a given country. In the course of studying the accessibility of media, it is possible to compile a rough inventory of what kinds of media are available to people in their homes, workplaces, modes of transportation, places of recreation and leisure, and so on. Such an inventory highlights the media choices that are available, and also whether people can access certain media as they go about their normal daily routines, or whether people have to make a specific trip or a concerted effort to access certain media. Therefore, an inventory of accessibility of media also helps put a rhetorical perspective on how the available media choices translate into cognitive and emotive points of reference that invite audiences to adopt certain feelings, beliefs, and behaviors related to the content that is accessed.

In Chapter 3, accessibility of media was compared to the feeder branches of a tree. This imagery symbolizes that just as the branches of a tree present leaves and seeds to passersby, media outlets similarly present content to audiences. Those feeder branches that place leaves and seeds within the reach of passersby are in effect making those leaves and seeds easily accessible, whereas those that are unreachable from the paths of passersby are in effect making certain media content difficult or even impossible to access. Similarly, media outlets that display leaves and seeds that are reachable from the paths of passersby are in effect making certain media content easy to access.

This chapter provides information that compares the accessibility of newspapers, radio, television, and internet. The main objective is to present the big picture of the accessibility of media across the eight countries studied in this book through the available data, rather than a comprehensive and standard numerical inventory of all the newspaper, radio, television and internet outlets that exist in each country. During the discussion, qualitative evaluations such as “low,” “moderate,” or “high” are used to describe aspects of a medium’s accessibility in comparison with the other countries.

NEWSPAPER DISTRIBUTION TERMS

It is helpful here to define terms used in this chapter to describe the distribution of newspaper content:

- A **broadsheet** is a newspaper whose shape is more horizontal than it is vertical before it is opened up. Broadsheets open up vertically, and then horizontally as the pages are turned. Contentwise, broadsheets usually are “serious newspapers” focusing on politics, crime, culture, business, education, and other related subjects.
- A **tabloid** is a newspaper whose shape is more vertical (it looks like a tablet) than it is horizontal before it is opened up. Tabloids are usually smaller than broadsheets, and are easier to page through in smaller spaces (for instance, while sitting on a train seats). Contentwise, tabloid-size newspapers can either be “serious” newspapers focusing mainly on factual news, or they can be “sensational” or “entertainment newspapers,” focusing mainly on dramatic news related to crime, celebrities, scandals, outrages, gossip, and so on.
- **Circulation** is the number of copies of a newspaper that are printed and delivered. Circulation figures do not necessarily indicate the number of newspapers that have been purchased or read. For example, *USA Today* is commonly circulated free of charge to hotel guests in the USA. Therefore, circulation refers simply to how many newspapers are distributed.

RADIO AND TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION TERMS

It is also helpful to define several terms used in this chapter to describe the delivery of radio and television content:

1. A **station** is a single facility that delivers a program. The station may broadcast its own programming, or it may broadcast programming obtained from another source.
2. A **network** is a group of *affiliate* stations or *member* stations (radio or television) that receive programming at select times of the day from a program supplier, which is usually a studio or a flagship radio or television station. Affiliate stations are usually commercial stations that forfeit local advertising time to the network in exchange for the right to broadcast network programming during portions of the broadcast day. Member stations are usually noncommercial stations that pay the network to broadcast the network's programming during portions of the broadcast day.
3. An **ownership group** is a collection of stations that belong to the same private corporation. Sometimes the programming is the same across all stations, and sometimes the programming differs between the stations.
4. A **channel** is a numerical brand used to identify a media outlet to allow the audience to easily identify a single source of the programming. Usually a radio or television channel is offered by a single media organization, and can be viewed or listened to in different geographic regions through the use of multiple transmitters, repeaters, or translators. Sometimes, a channel is used to represent the main public identity of the radio or television content; elsewhere, a station's call letters (e.g., WCAU) or a bandwidth frequency (90.3 FM) is used to represent the main public identity of the radio or television content.
5. **AM radio** refers to the distribution of programming on the Amplitude Modulation band (540 KHz to 1.7 MHz) of the frequency spectrum.
6. **FM radio** refers to the distribution of programming on the Frequency Modulation band (88 MHz to 108 MHz) of the frequency spectrum.
7. **Long Wave** refers to the distribution of programming on the Long Wave band (30 to 300 KHz) of the frequency spectrum.
8. **Short Wave** refers to the distribution of programming on the Short Wave band (5.9 MHz to 26.1 MHz) of the frequency spectrum.
9. **Terrestrial broadcasting** refers to content that is delivered through the airways to an antenna connected to a television set or a radio receiver.
10. **Broadcasting** refers to the delivery of content not just through the airwaves, but also through cable and satellite technology. In the past, the term *broadcasting* was used strictly to mean a process by which a transmitter delivers content through the airways to a television set or radio receiver. But television news programs that originate on terrestrial broadcast stations are often picked up and then redistributed by satellite and cable providers, or on the internet. Thus, because of the intertwining of cable, satellite, and terrestrial broadcasting, *broadcasting* and its derivations, *broadcast* and *broadcasters*, are increasingly being used to describe radio or television content received via the airways, satellite, or cable.
11. **Multichannel broadcaster** is a phrase used to categorize satellite and cable broadcasters together as essentially the same kind of entity. The main reason is that both satellite

and cable providers distribute multiple television and radio channels. A second reason is that the proliferation of global media conglomerates has led to similar television channel lineups on a given country's satellite and cable delivery systems.

- 12. Penetration** refers to the percentage of households that are reached by a particular medium (newspapers, radio, television, or internet). Penetration does not necessarily indicate the percentage of homes actually using a particular medium, but rather the percentage of potential households that could be accessing the medium. This definition differs somewhat from the cable television industry's definition of penetration as the percentage of homes subscribing to cable out of all the homes passed by a cable system.

SOURCE CITATION FOR STATISTICAL DATA PRESENTED

In an effort to avoid cluttering the flow of this chapter with citations for every sentence or figure presenting statistics, the sources are cited in this paragraph. Statistics on newspaper accessibility were obtained from *World Press Trends* (2003, 2002). Statistics on the internet were obtained from *InternetWorldStats* (2004) at internetworldstats.com. Statistics on broadcast accessibility were obtained from government-related regulatory agencies in the eight countries, either through interviews with agency spokespeople or through official agency documentation. The available statistics varied somewhat across each country.

NEWSPAPER TITLES AS IDIOMS

In this chapter, Chapter 9 (Media Content), as well as Chapter 10 (News Reporting), newspaper titles are presented in their domestic languages, but also with literal English translations. Usually, domestic newspaper titles become idioms when translated into English—that is, a group of words in a newspaper title take on a different meaning than the separate words would have in translation. For example, the French newspaper *Le Monde* translated into English as *The World* loses meanings that can be understood only by communicating in the French language. This makes translating newspaper titles into English titles somewhat of a misleading enterprise. Yet, to leave the titles in their domestic language without attempting to convey their meanings in English would miss an opportunity to help demystify totally foreign words and convey similar as well as different names of newspapers across the eight countries. Therefore, at the first mention of a non-English newspaper title in the next three chapters, an English translation will be provided—however imperfect it may be—but in subsequent mentions the titles will be listed only in the domestic language.

ACCESSIBILITY OF MEDIA IN FRANCE

Newspaper Access in France

In France, the penetration of daily newspapers in 2001 was low, at 33.1 percent of adults. This percentage is affected by the fact that France has a strong magazine industry. Total daily circulation for national newspapers in 1999 was 2,437,000. In France, there are five national daily newspapers: *Le Canard Enchaîné* (*The Enchained Duck*); *Le Figaro*;