How to...  
Evaluate Sources

This table below lists some of the distinguishing characteristics among different types of periodicals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>ARTICLE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</th>
<th>STRENGTHS &amp; WEAKNESSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Journals</td>
<td>Lengthy articles written by scholars, professors or researchers within the specific discipline</td>
<td>Usually plain black print on white paper</td>
<td>Strength: The in-depth nature of the article is helpful with obtaining information. Inclusion of bibliographies is useful if looking for additional sources. Weakness: Terminology and depth of articles may be difficult to understand if reader is not familiar with the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; Trade Periodicals</td>
<td>Articles vary in length and are often written by staff writers or freelance journalists</td>
<td>Some photographs and graphics</td>
<td>Strength: Provides up-to-date information on the profession, including trends and issues. Weakness: The characteristics of professional /trade periodicals and scholarly sources can be at times very similar making it difficult to distinguish the sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular &amp; Special Interest Magazines</td>
<td>Articles are usually fairly short, written by freelance journalists, editorial staff, or the author(s) may not be identified</td>
<td>Slick and glossy pages, Many photographs</td>
<td>Authors are typically not experts on the given subject matter and may present a bias or personal opinion. Weakness: There is often a lack of depth to articles; this can be difficult when trying to obtain information.</td>
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The Cultural Deficit in Broadcasting

by Louis B. Schwartz

The legal responsibility of industry and the FCC for cultural programming: a proposal for action.

American television has defaulted on its legal obligation to maintain the national cultural heritage, to diversify offerings from the point of view of levels of taste, and to satisfy the demand of an important segment of the audience that wants an effective alternative to lowest-common-denominator programming to mass tastes by mass advertisers. One may speak of a cultural deficit in this connection without, for the time being, undertaking to define it. The concept of high culture does not lend itself to comprehensive and precise definition. Like many unavoidably vague legal standards—due process of law, obscenity, reasonable grounds for arrest—it is only a rough guide by which judgments can be made and remade from time to time.

The ingredients for judgment are not hard to name. The material may be music, drama, painting, dance, architecture, history, biology, astronomy, politics, religion, or philosophy—in short, anything in the realm of the arts, the humanities, or science. It may be classical, but not hackneyed, or innovative with some promise of entering into the great flow of the history of thought and feeling. The material must be such as cannot be appreciated without attention and even some educational preparation. In that respect it would differ not only from the superficially distracting, easily accessible fare that presently dominates the commercial TV screen, but also from most offerings on "educational" television, which quite properly has a large commitment to the education of children, to current events, to cookery, to consumerism, and to civic affairs.

The important thing is not legalistic definition of what constitutes high culture, but providing credible appraisals of the broadcast system's performance from the standpoint of culture. That such appraisals are possible without rigorous advance definition of culture is evident from the fact that they are currently being made (not nearly as well as possible) by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, by national broadcasting agencies like the BBC, and in a few academic and industry studies.

The degree of cultural deficit in American broadcasting has been roughly estimated. Steiner's (7) study of New York City programming, published in 1963, arrived at a figure of 2.1 percent as the proportion of programs in the "cultural" category, remarkably low considering that New York is the cultural capital of the country, with the highest number of broadcasters. Bower (3) reports an aggregate of two per cent for offerings of "heavy drama" and "heavy music"—dreary characterizations that themselves reflect an anti-cultural bias—in Minneapolis-St. Paul in 1970. A review of Philadelphia offerings in sample weeks of 1972, made in connection with the present study, yielded a figure of 1.3 percent. The average for the United States as a whole must be well below the Philadelphia figure, perhaps one-half or three-quarters of one percent. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation offers its viewers five to seven times as much cultural programming, and Great Britain's BBC affords comparable fare for selective audiences.

The size of the potential audience for cultural programming is often underestimated. A study by the Roper Organization in January 1971, which was conducted for the broadcast-industry-supported Television Information Office, shows heavy public support for more specialized programming. Each

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Such comparisons are necessarily rough. The sources relied on are an analysis of CBC program content for a representative week in 1972, from the annual report of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1971-1972, and a table showing the content of BBC network television programs for 52 weeks ending March 31, 1972, from the BBC Handbook 1973. But these do not explicitly categorize by taste-level—neither do governmental broadcasting or industry sources in the U.S.—except as negative inferences which may be drawn from such labels as "light entertainment," "family programs," and "sports."
participant in the sample was asked the following question:

There is a certain amount of entertainment programming for people with specialized interests—ballets, classics of literature, serious music and so forth—and there is of course general interest entertainment programming designed for much broader audiences—variety shows, westerns, comedies, spy thrillers, etc. Would you like to see more of the special interest type of entertainment on television, or more of the general interest type of entertainment, or do you like the balance that now exists?

Thirty percent of the entire sample indicated that they desired more special interest programming. The figure was 50 percent for the college-educated members of the sample.

Before proceeding to consider the legal responsibility of the broadcasters and the Federal Communications Commission to satisfy minority tastes, we should not overlook the fact that the networks themselves readily override majoritarian programming when their interests are served by addressing a smaller but commercially more attractive audience. Advertisers' pressure to reach the "youth market" may lead the network to dump a high-rated established program which has hung onto its audience into middle age: "Conscious now of the quality of audiences—on age, income, and education levels—the media buyers of advertising agencies considered the two CBS comedians [Red Skelton and Jackie Gleason] overpriced for the kinds of people they delivered" (4, p. 55).

The Federal Communications Act requires the FCC to promote the public interest by "prescribing the nature of the service to be rendered by each class of licensed stations and each station within any class."

This statutory duty obliges the Commission to adopt regulations to promote diversity of broadcast offerings; to enlarge the consumers' effective choice among programs; to protect the rights of minority audiences to share in the enjoyment of the radio-frequency spectrum, a publicly owned resource; and to preserve the national cultural heritage.

The courts and the FCC have recognized the legal power and responsibility of the Commission to promote these goals. In 1969 the Supreme Court declared that "augmenting the public's choice of programs" was in the public interest, and sustained the Commission's power "to encourage diversified programming" by requiring cable television operators to originate programs in addition to those picked up from broadcasters (U.S. v. Midwest Video Corporation, 406 U.S. 649 [1969]). Also upheld was a rule forbidding CATV to duplicate a program locally broadcast on the same day, since such a rule favored "wider selection of programs on a particular day."

The right to satisfaction of minority aesthetic tastes was explicitly vindicated in 1970 in a case that involved a proposed change in the ownership and broadcasting format of Atlanta's only classical music station (Citizens Broadcasting Committee v. FCC, 436 F.2d 263 [D.C. Cir. 1970]). The new owner relied on a survey showing that only 16 percent of the Atlanta audience preferred the classical format to the proposed blend of popular music and news. The court held that the proposed transfer could not be approved without a hearing; that the public interest was not satisfied by having every broadcaster serve majority tastes; and that "it is in the public interest for all major aspects of contemporary culture to be accommodated by publicly owned resources whenever that is technically and economically feasible."

Affirming more broadly the public concern for "composition of the traffic," the Supreme Court has invariably sustained regulation reallocating broadcast time without regard to the business priorities of broadcasters and advertisers (National Broadcasting Co. v. U.S., 319 U.S. 190, 216 [1942] [network rules]; Regents of the University System of Georgia v. Carroll, 338 U.S. 586, 598 [1949] [relevance in licensing of the "character of (the licensee's) broadcasts"]; Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. FCC, 395 U.S. 367 [1969] [fairness and personal attack rules]).

At least since its 1960 Policy Statement on Programming, the FCC has exercised this power to maintain a "composition of the traffic" that conforms to the public interest in a variety of ways. The fairness doctrine rules, the personal attack rules, the local origination requirements imposed on CATV operators as well as broadcast licensees, and the duty to broadcast anti-smoking advertisements manifest the FCC's recognition of its power and responsibility to assure public interest programming. Other examples are the so-called "prime-time access" rules, rules regulating other broadcaster-network programming arrangements, and the requirement that broadcasters keep a program log so that the FCC may review programming at renewal time. The Commission, with the approval of the courts, has even given an ethnic preference in competition for a broadcast license "when minority ownership is likely to increase diversity of content" (TV9, Inc. v. FCC, 495 F.2d 989 [D.C. Cir. 1973]).

Although the FCC is aware of its responsibility for balanced programming, its explicit efforts to that end have been restricted to pressuring broadcasters to allocate time to news, public affairs, local features, and ethnic interests.

The Commission has shown little concern for diversity of taste levels appealed to by the entertainment fare. Entertainment is obviously the core of the viewers' demand for broadcast services; but the Commission seems to expect an adequate balance in this sphere to result from certain indirect measures, chiefly

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1 47 C.F.R. 73.638(k), limiting the permissible amount of network programming in the evening by requiring at least one hour of locally selected broadcasting in that period.

2 47 C.F.R. 73.638(i) and (j) (network representation of stations for sale of non-network time; network syndication of non-network programs).
maintaining the theoretical "independence" of licensees from domination by networks, chain broadcasters, newspapers, or other competing media. These efforts have proved to be individually and collectively inadequate to provide the American audience with the kind of program choices to which it is entitled.

The Commission has usefully—although at times falteringly—attempted to restrict multiple ownership of broadcasting facilities and to restrain the dominance of networks over licensee programming. It has done these things in the hope that decentralization of power might create a responsive "free market" in which antagonistic ideas would be duly aired and diverse tastes gratified. Such a market has not, of course, been achieved.

At the same time as entertainment programming gravitates into the hands of three national networks, the potential for locally originated programming is narrowed by the FCC's policy of denying licenses to new would-be broadcasters. If the additional competition would so "fractionate" the audience that existing operators would not be able to operate at the level that public interest requires. Regulation has further protected licensees from competition by virtually closing the door against pay TV (which would permit the viewer rather than the advertiser to call the tune) and by restricting CATV service that would be competitive with over-the-air broadcasting (2). The threat of potential competition from newcomers seeking to replace the existing operator at the end of his license period has been relieved by a series of measures: lengthening the license term from one to three years (a pending bill would make it five); giving the existing operator a preferential right to renew; and extending the right of protest against establishment of new stations.

It is one of the ironies of the situation that governmental opposition to fractionating the broadcasters' market, rationalized as promotion of the public interest, has as one of its consequences the suppression of cultural programs. Progressive fractionation of the mass audience, if not interfered with, would eventually cause the "selective audience" to emerge as a plurality, attractive on purely commercial grounds to one or more broadcasters.

Governmental barriers against free entry into broadcasting assure surplus revenues above the level that the licensed operators would obtain in a competitive market, theoretically in order that such surplus should be absorbed in performing "public service" obligations that an unregulated competitive market would not sustain. But most of the surplus revenues thus generated have not been used in the public service; they have simply been pocketed by the licensees. The rate of return on investment in broadcasting is notoriously high. It produces inflated valuations of the right to engage in broadcasting, when stations are transferred from one owner to another. Transfer prices are virtually beyond the control of the Commission. A transferee who had paid the capitalized value of an excessive stream of profits no longer has "surplus" revenues to be absorbed in public service commitments.

The problem then is to reclaim for the public service a flow of revenues generated by the government's tolerance of and support for monopoly in the broadcast industry. This might be done by declaring a public trust in such excess revenues or by compelling the industry to perform the public service obligations which that flow of revenues was designed to finance. To put it another way, when a market is not—perhaps cannot be—effectively competitive, public regulation must be invoked to assure the flow and quality of service that public interest requires.

We turn now to an appraisal of public regulation in this field. Four main shortcomings are revealed: a defective concept of "balanced programming" that fails to reflect different levels of taste; application of the balancing concept to offerings of a particular broadcaster over the broadcast day, and not to the offerings of broadcasters collectively at any hour of the day; failure to hold the networks sufficiently responsible; and failure of the FCC regulations and forms to reflect a concern for the national cultural heritage.

The present concept of balanced programming fails to discriminate among the levels of taste to be satisfied.

If taste levels were taken into consideration, a single station could not meet the mark if its "diversification" consisted of an assortment, in the course of a day or week, of "movies," "news," "sports," "light comedy," "talk shows," etc. Moreover, the dial as a whole would not satisfy the criterion of offering at a given hour "movies" on one channel, "sports" on another, and "light comedy" on a third. That type of diversity is what the broadcasting industry calls "counter-programming."

But diversity in program type is significant only to the extent that it attracts disparate audiences. If a Western, a situation comedy, and a musical variety show are programmed opposite one another by the three networks, that may be an improvement in program choice over three movie dramas or three quiz programs. However, the degree of meaningful program diversity thus provided would be minimal as long as these programs were all directed at the lowest-common-denominator audience. It is cultural counter-programming that is required.

Balance in programming is treated by the FCC as the proportions of an individual station's broadcast time devoted to specified categories. Substantially disregarded is the element of diversity, at any given hour, of offerings by the stations collectively. The concept of balance that is longitudinal through time for a single broadcaster must be supplemented by one that is latitudinal across the tuning dial. Only thus can true diversity be achieved and consumer choices be enlarged. The Commission must effectively discourage such outrages of viewer manipulation as simultaneous broadcast on three networks of moon landings or presidential addresses. These may be overpoweringly significant events for many viewers, but an audience should not be a captive audience.

4 See National Association of Theater Owners v. FCC, 430 F.2d 194 (D.C. Cir. 1970), for a review of the 17 years of governmental resistance to Zenith Radio Corporation's proposal to inaugurate a subscription television service. A severely limited subscription service over CATV was authorized in 1972.

5 See, for example, the "recapture" provisions of the Transportation Act of 1920. See also Citizens Communications Center v. FCC, 447 F.2d 1201, 1213 (D.C. Cir. 1971), which proposes as a criterion for renewal: "whether and to what extent the incumbent has reinvested the profit on his license to the service of the viewing and listening public."

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one-half hours of prime time in an affiliated broadcaster’s day. The purpose of this regulation was to provide access to the TV screen on prime time for independent and locally produced shows; but experience with the prime-time access rule has been disappointing. Instead of promoting cultural diversity, from the point of view of taste levels, the opportunity has been used by local broadcasters merely to offer inexpensive quiz shows, movies, and reruns of old syndicated serials. The FCC has on occasion waived its prime-time access rule in favor of special cultural or news programs (1, p. 10; 5, p. 51). The Commission has also modified the original rule to allow network programming in “access time,” where the program offered falls into certain categories (“children’s specials, documentary, or public affairs”). It would be no great next step to make a general exception from the prime-time access rule for network cultural counter-programming. Similarly, the rules restricting the number of distant signals CATV operators are allowed to screen should be relaxed in favor of cultural counter-programming.

The Commission should establish a National Advisory Board on Cultural Heritage and Innovation in Broadcasting. In an era of national networks, it behooves the Commission to follow its own advice to licensees, by consulting with cultural leaders in “a positive diligent and continuing effort . . . to determine the tastes, needs, and desires of the public.”

The American broadcasting industry has immense reserves of power and talent. At its best, the commercial system affords magnificent spectacles, superb commentary, and even—at hours when the advertisers are not computing ratings and audience fractions—significant cultural events. To fill gaps in its performance, we cannot rely alone on a Public Broadcasting System that is underfinanced and politically vulnerable. Nor, as has been shown, can we rely on competitive forces in a theoretically free market, since broadcasting is and will remain monopolistic. Only effective regulation by the FCC can make this industry contribute properly to the public interest by promoting our cultural heritage and increasing the real alternatives available to the audience.

REFERENCES

*See National Association of Independent Television Producers and Distributors v. FCC, 502 F.2d 249 (2nd Cir. 1974), which reviews the experience and the Commission’s response thereto, including the modifications referred to in the text.
Table 1: Mean number of favorable words selected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Article type</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
<th>Quantified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a See fn. 1.
b F = 13.14, p < .001 (1,100 df; Article type \times Sex interaction = 0.14, n.s.).
c F = 0.03, n.s.

A high proportion of nitrogen. Both articles were otherwise identical, and were approximately equal in level of difficulty as measured by the Flesch Score; without numbers = 6.3374, with numbers = 6.9161 (11). Unlike previous studies, therefore, the conventional measure of textual difficulty (readability) was controlled, allowing only quantification to vary.

Testing was conducted during the academic session of 1971-72. The experiment was of post-test-only design, in which half of a sample of 100 university students was randomly assigned to read one version of the article, and half to read the other. Both groups after reading were presented with a list of 30 words: 10 unfavorable, 10 neutral, and 10 favorable to the likelihood of solving the problems posed in the article. The list therefore formed a rough bipolar indicator of predisposition. Words were arranged at random and respondents were instructed to underline each word most appropriately expressing their opinion. Predisposition favorable to finding solutions was measured by the frequency of favorable words selected.

Results showed that predisposition significantly decreased in favorability after exposure to quantification, confirming the hypothesis. The group exposed to descriptive modifiers in the article selected a range of 3.20-3.40 favorable words compared to 1.92-2.00 selected by the group exposed to quantification in the article. The decline in favorability was highly significant: F = 13.14, p < .001 (see Table 1). A breakdown by sex showed no significant main (F = 0.03) or interactive (F = 0.14) effects.

In general, it seems important that a factor of textual difficulty such as quantification apparently can adversely affect predispositional states about resolving issues. Insofar as public opinion is likely to be affected by mass media reporting, the possible effects of factors of textual difficulty become of practical as well as theoretical importance. This is particularly true of scientific reporting because much of the basic information is quantitative in nature.

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1 Unfavorable words: impossible, difficult, unfavorable, improbable, impractical, unfeasible, unachievable, inconceivable, unimaginable, unreasonable; neutral words: blue, fast, low, bad, below, inexact, small, negative, red, green; favorable words: likely, certain, attainable, workable, unambiguous, precise, accessible, available, successful, unquestionable.

2 Frequency data were used rather than summed scalar ratings because there was no linguistic basis upon which to presume scalar unidimensionality of a list of more or less unrelated words.
If the economic influences on content choices are significant, scores on the first three indices should decrease over the years. Scores on the last index, equilibrium, should decrease as the amount of time in a category increases, indicating that the networks are striving to maintain a status quo ante position.4

External correlates. In order to provide some perspective on changes throughout the years in network schedules, we collected data on broadcast industry profits, network program executives, and instances of outside pressure on the broadcast from 1953 to 1974.

Our examination yielded the following results:

Trends in program content. Figure 1 shows the percentage of time all networks devoted per week to the major program categories—A/A, situation comedies, general drama, movies, variety shows5—from 1953-74. (Other categories have been omitted from the graph for clarity.) The most obvious trend on the graph is the rapid rise of A/A programs to a dominant position in network programming. Since 1957, this category has accounted for the greatest amount of prime time. If conceptions about reality can be cultivated by TV entertainment programming, then the most prevalent influence on audiences of prime-time television for the last 17 years may be reality as portrayed in the world of the action/adventure series.6 The graph also reveals that A/A programs seem to peak at seven year intervals, showing their highest levels in 1960, 1967, and, perhaps, in 1974.7

The other program types are not nearly as variable. Situation comedies have remained at a fairly stable level since 1953, displaying only one period of sharp increase in 1964-65. In fact, since 1967 the percentage of time devoted to situation comedies varied no more than three percentage points per year. Variety shows remained relatively stable in 1953-58, dropped sharply the next two years, but went through a period of resurgence in 1960-63. In 1970, this program type went into a sharp decline and reached its nadir in the 1974 season. General drama programs also displayed cyclical trends but these were stretched over longer periods of time, generally increasing during 1959-65, decreasing during 1966-68, and showing an increase since then. Movies have generally increased since the 1961-62 season although there are signs this trend is leveling off. The graph also indicates mutual interdependence among each of the program types. Thus, as A/A time increases, the other types generally decrease and vice versa.

Those content categories omitted from the graph are those that have mainly died out in prime-time TV. Quiz shows increased during the fifties but disappeared during the sixties. Interview shows, public affairs, dramatic anthologies, and news programs are no longer regularly scheduled, weekly prime-time series. Sports, thanks to Monday night football, has made a re-appearance in the seventies after disappearing from prime time in 1963.

Analyzing these data by network, we found indications of the "follow the leader" tendency common to oligopolies.

This was especially apparent in the A/A category. The ABC network led the way in the early growth of this programming, showing an increase of 800 percent from 1955 to 1960. As ABC escalated, it was followed in turn by NBC, which increased its A/A time by approximately 1200 percent from 1956 to 1960. CBS also followed suit, although not as drastically, by increasing its A/A time by 100 percent from 1956 to 1959.

A second period of escalation in A/A programs from 1965 to 1967 was started by simultaneous increases on the part of NBC and ABC, while CBS imitated this trend in 1967. The last escalation period, 1970-74, was initiated by NBC with a 55 percent increase in A/A time. CBS immediately increased its A/A time by 100 percent in 1971 by 100 percent. ABC vacillated until 1974 when its A/A content jumped by approximately 80 percent.

The same tendency also occurred in the situation comedy genre, but NBC did not follow the crowd. In 1958-60, CBS increased situation comedy time by 82 percent followed by ABC with a 100 percent increase in 1959-61. During the years 1967-70, CBS increased situation comedy time 28 percent and again was followed by ABC with a 60 percent increase in 1968-71. Imitation was also present in the middle and late fifties as each network

8 The DuMont Network was in evidence for two of the years covered by our study, 1953-54. Its programming is included in our computation of the instability and diversity indexes but its offerings were too sparse to be included in the homogeneity and equilibrium.

4 Our three categories of variety shows have been omitted for easier presentation.

5 Of course our data underestimate the amount of A/A time actually on the air since many movies could also fit into the A/A category.

6 Or 1953-69 data essentially agree with Clark and Blankenburg's findings on violence as coded from TV Guide synopses.


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We report tests of hypotheses derived from a theory of supportive communication outcomes that maintains the effects of supportive messages are moderated by factors influencing the motivation and ability to process these messages. Participants in two studies completed a measure of cognitive complexity, which provided an assessment of processing ability, and reported their degree of upset with a problem situation, which was hypothesized to impact both motivation and ability; they subsequently evaluated the helpfulness of comforting messages that varied in person centeredness. Consistent with predictions, an index of message processing depth—the degree to which participants discriminated between the helpfulness of better and worse supportive messages—was associated with the factors additively in both studies and interactively in one study.


Emotional support—the “expression of care, concern, affection, and interest, especially during times of stress or upset” (Burleson, 2003, p. 552) —is a fundamental component of personal relationships (Cunningham & Barbee, 2000). Efforts to provide emotional support are not always helpful (Dunkel-Schetter, Blasband, Feinstein, & Herbert, 1992) —and, in fact, can be harmful (e.g., Ingram, Jones, Fass, Neidig, & Song, 1999). On balance, though, the receipt of high-quality support is typically associated with a variety of positive outcomes, including improved affect (Burleson, 1994), enhanced coping (Thoits, 1986), mental and physical health (Wills & Fegan, 2001), and relationship satisfaction (Samter, 1994).

The outcomes observed for supportive messages (both positive and negative) have provided the impetus for several research programs aimed at identifying properties of more and less effective emotional support efforts (see Burleson & MacGeorge, 2002; Cunningham & Barbee, 2000; Goldsmith, 2004). As these research programs developed, however, it became increasingly apparent that emotionally supportive (i.e., comforting) messages often have variable effects because of the aspects of the recipient, the helper, and the communication situation (see reviews by Bodie & Burleson, 2008; Burleson, 2009; Lakey & Cohen, 2000; Sarason, Sarason, & Gurung, 1997; W. Stroebe & Stroebe, 1996).

Understanding variations in the evaluation and impact of comforting messages is important for both theoretical and practical ends. From a theoretical point of view, if systematic differences exist in the way individuals experience comforting messages, we want to know what these differences are and why they occur. By addressing why these differences exist, we can better comprehend the underlying mechanisms through which comforting messages lead to varied outcomes. From a pragmatic point of view, research explaining variations in the impact of comforting messages can provide insights for those attempting to provide help by recommending specific types of support most relevant to particular individuals or situations. Indeed, a premise of both theory (e.g., Gottlieb, 1994) and practical advice on social support (e.g., Cutrona & Cole, 2000) is that tailoring messages to fit perceived needs of the recipients is a more efficacious strategy than using a one-size-fits-all approach. To date, however, research investigating this claim has been limited to evaluating the “optimal matching” of support type (e.g., informational, emotional) to problem situation (Cutrona & Russell, 1990); research focused on explaining why specific message features impact outcomes to greater or lesser degrees is very rare (see Goldsmith, 2004).

The research reported herein explores the possibility that individual and situational differences in responses to comforting messages reflect underlying differences in how these messages are processed cognitively by their recipients. We begin by sketching a conceptual framework focused on understanding how the processing of supportive messages influences their outcomes and then report two studies that tested aspects of this framework by assessing how certain factors moderated recipient judgments about the helpfulness of different comforting messages.

Conceptual framework and hypotheses

In an effort to explain when and why numerous source, message, contextual, and recipient factors influence the consequences of support interactions, Bodie and Burleson (2008) and Burleson (2009, 2010) recently proposed a dual-process theory of supportive communication outcomes. This theory applies the general logic of dual-process thinking to the processing and outcomes of varied forms
THE PREVALENCE AND INFLUENCE OF THE COMBINATION OF HUMOR AND VIOLENCE IN SUPER BOWL COMMERCIALS

Benjamin J. Blackford, James Gentry, Robert L. Harrison, and Les Carlson

ABSTRACT: The growing concern over violence in the media has led to vast amounts of research examining the effects of violent media on viewers. An important subset of this research looks at how humor affects this relationship. While research has considered this subset in television programming, almost no research has explored this in the context of advertising. This paper builds on the little research that exists by examining the effects of combining humor and violence, as well as the theoretical approaches that underlie these effects. A content analysis is conducted to identify the prevalence of violence, humor, and the combination of these elements in a longitudinal sample of Super Bowl commercials (2005, 2007, and 2009). Further, we investigate the relationship between the joint occurrence of humor and violence in ads and ad popularity. We conclude that violent acts are rampant in these commercials and that many acts are camouflaged by the simultaneous presence of humor, especially in the most popular ads.

A bowling ball falls on a man’s head to advertise a soft drink. Employees hurl a coworker out a window because of the mere suggestion that a specific beer should no longer be provided at meetings in order to reduce expenses. In another office setting, coworkers use a snow globe to break into a snack machine in pursuit of a certain snack food and to injure a supervisor. This is but a snapshot of the television commercials being aired that use humor in combination with violent acts to promote various products. How common is media content such as this in commercials? What effect does it have on the audience’s reaction to the ad?

The effects of viewing violent media are the subject of a large body of research across a number of disciplines including psychology, sociology, public policy, law, and marketing. Initial research in this area began to appear in the mid-1950s with a variety of studies (Anderson et al. 2003). For example, Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) found that children who viewed live violent acts or televised violent acts tended to imitate these actions and engage in more violent actions themselves. A recent review article by Murray (2008) identified 1,945 research articles in the last 50 years examining the effects of television. Of these articles, approximately 600 focused on the issue of violence (Murray 2008).

A related topic that has received limited attention in the literature is the use of humor in combination with the portrayal of violence. Such studies have generally found that the use of humor in conjunction with violence lessens the perception of violence. King (2000) suggests one reason for using humor in combination with violence is to relieve or reduce audience stress from dramatic scenes. Humor may also serve to suggest to the audience that the events are not to be taken seriously. If the audience is affected by this cue, humor may trivialize the violence that is occurring, as suggested by Potter and Warren (1998). Potter and Warren raise a concern, based on work by Bandura (1994), that the trivialization of violence leads to a greater likelihood of such acts being imitated. In fact, Potter and Warren (1998) use the term “camouflage” to refer to the consumer’s reaction to violence in the presence of humor, whereas Scharrer et al. (2006) use the term “desensitize.” If this is the case, it becomes important to identify how often humor is combined with violence in various forms of media, as this combination may have an influence as large as or larger than the display of violent acts in isolation.

Given the potential adverse consequences attributable to combining these factors, this research seeks to provide further insight into the prevalence of the use of humor in combination with violence and their joint influence on ad popularity. Prior content analyses have approached this issue in a variety of ways, including analysis of violence in commercials during sporting events (Tamburro et al. 2004), as well as examinations of combinations of violence and humor occurring during nightly television programming (Potter and Warren 1998).
Automakers hit the gas on marketing spending

General Motors, VW, Hyundai to put big budgets behind host of launches

How to Evaluate Sources

Alan Batey, General Motors' VP-U.S. sales, was smiling big at the New York International Auto Show last week. GM is coming off a 7% sales gain in February, beating the industry's 4% growth, and it's got 13 new models on the way just from Chevrolet. As a result, what Mr. Batey believes to be a pent-up hunger by consumers for new cars and trucks they couldn't or wouldn't buy during the economic recession. "The average [car or truck] is now over 10 years old. So there a lot of vehicles coming to the end of their useful lives," Mr. Batey said. "We're seeing a really good car environment: good resale values; good access to credit; and very low rates. It's a good time to buy a car and a good time to buy a truck."

He wasn't the only optimistic auto executive as the 10-day show kicked off at the Jacob Javits Center. With the U.S. economy slowly improving, total auto sales rose 13% in 2012—the industry's best performance since 2006, according to John Tews of J.D. Power and Associates. And several top automotive executives said they plan to boost advertising and spending in 2013 to take advantage of the moment.

SUPER BOWL SO SOON?

"We've got a lot of launch activity. With a lot of launch activity, you tend to have a good budget level," said James Urvilitat, global marketing director of Cadillac, who noted sales are up 32% so far this year. At the show, Cadillac unveiled a sleeker CTS sedan that will take aim at luxury-car-rival BMW. But Cadillac's advertising focus for this year will remain on the recently launched XTS and ATS models.

GM's luxury unit has launched an agency review for its creative business that is expected to wrap up this spring. Agencies from Interpublic Group of Cos., Omnicom Group and Publicis Groupe are all vying for the business. Cadillac, a plum account spending roughly $250 million a year in the U.S., currently uses Fallon for creative and Carat for media duties.

Similarly, Kevin Mayer, VP-marketing for Volkswagen of America, said he's eyeing a bigger ad outlay as consumers finally sell or trade in their old vehicles in favor of new ones. Mr. Mayer raved about the work of his ad agency, Deutsch, L.A.

Steve Shannon, VP-marketing for Hyundai Motor America, said he's already thinking about advertising on Fox Sports' telecast of Super Bowl XLVIII from MetLife Stadium in New Jersey. Hyundai works with Innocean in Huntington Beach, Calif.

"We've still got a little homework to do," said Mr. Shannon about advertising on the big game. "But odds are we'd love to come back."

After a big start to the year in January and February, auto sales will remain strong in March, according to a J.D. Power forecast. Dealers are getting higher prices, too. The average new-vehicle transaction price is $28,504, up 3% in March 2013 compared to the same month in 2012, said J.D. Power.

Priced considerably higher than that was the hottest car at the event: GM's 2014 Corvette Stingray. Chevy then surprised attendees by unveiling an ultra-fast new Z/28 Camaro that GM president Mark Reuss described as a "street-legal track car."
Has Facebook lost faith in social ads?

After once vowing to transform online advertising, it’s increasingly embracing standard offerings

By Cotton Delo — cdelo@adage.com

Has Facebook lost faith in the potential of social ads and its mantra of “word-of-mouth marketing at scale”? The company once publicly eschewed cookie-based ads in favor of its own targeting tools fueled by information that users knowingly provide about themselves. But it’s done an about-face in the past six months, with FBX, out of beta and begun allowing retargeting — users’ news feeds. It brought its ad exchange, FBX, of native targeting based on user data like age, location and avowed interests as inherently superior to web tracking — in terms of accuracy as well as privacy.

Social contest is now an ingredient in Facebook’s marketing recipe instead of being the whole meal. For the past year, ad strategy has been driven by the concept of layering the social network’s own interest- and demographic-based targeting with data marketers gather independently, said Gokul Rajaram, Facebook’s product-management director for ads and pages.

“Social is one of the foundation elements of Facebook advertising,” he said. “We’re simply turbocharging and enhancing ways for marketers to reach people.”

LINGUA OF THE CMO

While Facebook clearly isn’t abandoning social ads, its adoption of more tried-and-true online-ad models has the advantage of being more easily explained to CMOS, most of whom never grasped the significance of accruing fans and “likes,” according to Colin Sutton, social-media director at OMD.

“Social levers were interesting, but buying against specific audiences and specific audience behavior is much more interesting for brands and marketers, and much more effective at finding the right people at the right time,” he said.

Mr. Sutton also observed that Facebook’s relatively new “custom audiences” product, which lets brands upload their CRM database to Facebook to target their existing customer bases, has further refined audiences, making the social network’s native targeting more useful.

As a public company with tremendous quarterly pressure to deliver revenue, Facebook may have a strategic mandate to chase the easy money that its scale can deliver through a product like FBX. However, it risks distancing itself from its lofty positioning as a place for brands to have relationships with people, which resonated with many marketers, according to Ian Schafer, CEO of Deep Focus.

“It’s become less about having a relationship ... and more about reach,” he said. “I would hate to see Facebook just end up being a publisher like everyone else is.”

How Sears got into the data-services game

Not just Craftsman tools: Retailer finds commercial business-to-business opportunity in MetaScale

By Kate Kaye — kkaye@adage.com

Would you hire Sears to manage your data strategy?

The troubled retailer known for brands like Kenmore and Craftsman is promoting a business-to-business brand called MetaScale that does just that.

Around three years ago, Sears embarked on an internal initiative to make its legacy data systems faster and able to offer more cost-efficient analyses for things like pricing and targeted offers. At the heart of that project was Hadoop, the file system employed by just about every company looking to transform traditional data operations to enable speedier access and analysis.

Like many large department stores, Sears has a slew of customer data. It has “well over 100 million customers that we know details about,” said Philip Shelley, chief technology officer of Sears, who serves as CEO of MetaScale, while speaking at the 2012 Hadoop Summit last June. Mr. Shelley is one of a few execs who hold dual Sears/MetaScale roles. The others shall remain nameless for fear they could be snapped up by competitors, he said.

“We’ve had one or two people poached already,” said Mr. Shelley.

POSITIVE NAME IN DATA

It might seem curious that Sears’ data-management systems are sought after considering the company is under intense scrutiny as it shuttered stores amid weak sales. Sears Holdings reported a $930 million loss in 2012, with sales falling $1.7 billion. The year before that, the company lost $3.1 billion as sales slid $1.1 billion.

But since unveiling MetaScale about a year ago, Sears seems to be making a more positive name for itself—at least in the burgeoning Hadoop-focused data community.

The company was among a handful of firms chosen by around 6,000 Hadoop users to run a conference track at the 2013 Hadoop Summit in San Jose, Calif., in June. Among others were Netflix and Yahoo.

So, why would a nearly 130-year-old company venture into an emerging data-services sector? It was a natural progression. Sears was “leading edge in terms of the use of these big-data tools,” said Mr. Shelley, who increasing-ly found himself sharing knowledge with other large companies seeking advice about how to modernize their data systems.

“They asked how they could use some of the same techniques. I used to do that on a voluntary basis on a phone call,” he said. “We said, ‘This looks like a commercial opportunity here.”

Today, MetaScale serves clients in financial services and health care, though it would not reveal any client names or the number of its clients and employees.

MetaScale customers typically host data in their own facilities, though Sears warehouses some client data for backup and redundancy purposes. Sears’ own data resides in its Michigan data facility. The retailer provides its people and knowledge for its clients, but its own data and systems are kept separate, Mr. Shelley said.

Though MetaScale competes on some levels with data-platform companies Cloudera and Hortonworks, Mr. Shelley said he believes there’s a lot of room for additional players. “There’s a huge need there,” he said. “It’s only just emerging.”

To see more of this article, please visit: http://www.adage.com/
Airlines slug it out for business-class fliers with perks

Marketing for higher-margin customers focuses on extras like turn-down service, express meals

By Shareen Pathak — spathak@creativity-online.com

Thanks to the plethora of mergers in the airline industry—a bankruptcy judge just last week cleared the marriage of US Airways and American Airlines—things aren’t looking good for the hoi polloi. As a recent Slate article pointed out, the era of cheap airfare is pretty much over, with four major airlines controlling 70% of the U.S. aviation market.

With the economy-class market locked up with fewer service and fare options, the lucrative premium-class customer is getting more marketing attention. That segment, according to a United spokesman, provides a “disproportionate share of total revenue.” At Delta, for example, the top 5% of passengers account for 26% of revenue.

“The consolidation you’re seeing is absolutely placing a premium on the business traveler,” said Jonathan Clarkson, a director of marketing at Southwest Airlines. “It is a high-yield, loyal and extremely knowledgeable traveler.” Corporate-travel demand is also rising: The Global Business Travel Association said it expects spending to rise 4.6% in 2013 to $266.7 billion.

American Airlines VP-Marketing Rob Friedman said its strategy is designed to make it “the airline of choice” for high-value customers, particularly important because the highest 20% of America’s customers generate 70% of its revenue.

So where’s the battleground for the business traveler? In perks.

Greeley Koch, exec director at the Associate of Corporate Travel Executives, said that flat, 180-degree seats are now becoming standard for airlines. Once those are in place, “marketing emphasis is shifting to other service elements.” For example, an express-meal service that lets premium passengers get meals served and cleared quickly, or an option to eat while in the airport lounge.

IN-FLIGHT BEDDING

Marketing these extras is usually done via in-airport advertising or direct-to-consumer communication. Last year, Delta toured a “Cube” around Europe, which let people try out its new flat-bed seat. The airline is also marketing its “Sleep Experience” initiative, which partnered with Westin to provide “Heavenly In-Flight Bedding”—special pillows, comforters, and on some flights, a lumbar-support pillow—to its business-elite passengers.

At TED2013, the airline went futuristic, hosting a talk and demo with sleep scientist Russell Foster, who showed off the “world’s first Photon shower”—a light chamber to help people recover from jet lag. Although just a concept for now, Kristen Manion, managing director-worldwide marketing communication at Delta, says the shower might “be on planes one day, in the form of goggles,” or more realistically, in airport lounges. Delta is investing $2 billion on enhancing its products and services in 2013—including putting Malin & Goetz and Tumi goodies in amenity kits.

Last year, United made a $550 million investment on aircraft-interior improvements, and another $50 million to revamp its United Club lounges. Perks include a “turndown” service on United Global First and celebrity-chef-prepared gourmet meals. Turn-down service is also offered on American.
In 2004, *Shaun of the Dead* became a cult hit. That alone was a victory for its creators—director Edgar Wright, actor and Wright’s writing partner Simon Pegg, and actor Nick Frost, who collaborated on the British TV series *Spaced*—but the fact that it set them on the road to creating one of the great genre trilogies is a miracle. Their follow-up, 2007’s buddy-cop send-up *Hot Fuzz*, cemented their reputation for whip-smart scripts that both satirized and embraced the sci-fi and pulp tropes they’d grown up with. (Hell, Pegg’s 2011 memoir, *Nerd Do Well*, includes enough *Star Wars* meditations to choke a Hutt.) Since then, Edgar Wright directed *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*, and has been developing *Ant-Man* for Marvel. Pegg nabbed plum roles in the *Mission: Impossible* and *Star Trek* franchises, and Frost has popped up everywhere from *Attack the Block* to *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Now, at last, the band is getting back together. Its Three Flavors Cornetto trilogy concludes with August’s *The World’s End*. The movie follows a group of friends who try to re-create an epic pub crawl from their youth but become humanity’s only hope in the face of an otherworldly apocalypse. Just your typical night out, really. *Wired*: When you guys first teamed up for *Shaun of the Dead*, were you planning on making a trilogy?

**Simon Pegg:** When we were doing *Shaun of the Dead* we didn’t even know if we were going to do *Shaun of the Dead*. It was a small, low-budget British film; we just wanted to finish it and get it out. When it did well and *Hot Fuzz* became a possibility, the idea of it becoming a series of three films began to take shape. *Edgar Wright*: It’s more of a thematic series: The characters aren’t related, but they have overarching themes and could be pieced together. With *The World’s End*, we finally put a big full stop to the whole idea of perpetual adolescence.

**Is that the thread that connects these stories?**

**Pegg:** If you look at them all together, there’s a strong recurring theme of the individual versus the collective. It’s about one person or a small group of people fighting against a large homogenizing group, whether it be zombies or *Hot Fuzz*’s Neighborhood Watch Association or the enemy in *The World’s End*. *Nick Frost:* It’s also about the three of us growing up as people. I think you can see the characters doing that, which is quite nice. Our problems have changed, as our problems as humans have changed, essentially. **Pegg:** Edgar and I have always been fascinated with the idea of growing older. With *Spaced* it was about not knowing what to do with the time you’ve been given. In *Shaun of the Dead* it was about having to grow up very quickly, and in *Hot Fuzz* it was almost about dumbing down—having to devolve slightly to win the day. In *The World’s End* it’s about being 40, really. It’s about reaching a point in your life when everything has changed and you’re not who you used to be. *Wright*: I guess the thing that connects them is trying to smuggle a relationship comedy under the auspices of a genre film. *Shaun of the Dead* was really a romantic comedy about a commitment-phobe. *Hot Fuzz* is really a workplace comedy turned into a major epic. *The World’s End* is like a Mike Leigh film about friends reuniting who have their plan for recreating their glory days disrupted.

**“With The World’s End, we finally put a big full stop to the idea of perpetual adolescence.”**

**What about smaller running gags like fence-jumping? Do you keep those things in there for fans?**

**Pegg:** Absolutely. That connective tissue is for people who have been with us from the beginning. When it came to *The World’s End*, we didn’t figure out a way to do it until we were doing reshoots. I love the idea of a joke working across three disparate films. It’s less about being self-indulgently self-referential and more about bringing three films together.

**Where did calling the films the Three Flavors Cornetto trilogy come from?**

**Wright:** In the first film, Ed asks for a Cornetto (a British ice cream treat) when Shaun goes to the store—that came about because when I was in college I used to think that Cornetto ice cream was a good hangover cure.
In the UK it got a big laugh because it's quite a random foodstuff to ask for. Then at the premiere of *Shaun of the Dead*, we got free ice cream from Cornetto, so we thought, "Hey, we'd better write ice cream into the second one, we might get more free ice cream!" No free ice cream turned up, but it had already become a thing. In an interview someone asked me, "Are you going to do a trilogy of Cornettos based on the flavors?" And I said, "Oh yeah, it's going to be like Krzysztof Kieslowski's Three Colors trilogy, it's going to be Three Flavors Cornetto." And it stuck.

**The World's End** is built around a pub crawl, and pubs feature prominently in *Shaun of the Dead* and *Hot Fuzz*. What's with all the drinking?

**Frost:** To a lesser or greater extent the pub is part of British culture. The traditional pub as we know it—the pubs we see in *The World's End* and *Hot Fuzz* and *Shaun of the Dead*—are sadly dying out now.

**Pegg:** The pub, even more than the Cornetto, has been the linking factor in these films. In *Shaun of the Dead* it's where they hide, in *Hot Fuzz* it's where Danny and Nick finally bond, and in this one it's about these guys re-creating this monumental drinking quest. It's one of those things that men do in the UK—they go out and they get really, really drunk.

Was there one pub in particular that you really gravitated to when you were younger?

**Wright:** In the opening scene of *Shaun of the Dead* Shaun's girlfriend at that point complains, "Do we always have to come to the Winchester? Can't we go for dinner?" That was based on Simon and Nick. They used to live together and they used to go to this pub called the Shepherds every single night of the week—if I wanted to see them, I would have to go to that pub.

**Frost:** For years that was our place. We were kind of hoisted by our own petard—it was a quiet pub when we got there. When we started to go to the pub quiz, there'd be only 10 or 20 people there. But by the last pub quiz we did, just before it shut, there were probably 200 people packed into the pub. We had Coldplay playing in the pub at one point. Gillian Anderson from *The X-Files* came and did the pub quiz one night. It's like a holy grail for me to rediscover the Shepherds, because it was utterly perfect.

**Pegg:** I actually quit drinking three years ago because I'd become a father, and it was weird having to reconnect with that kind of behavior. It had become alien to me, ironically.

**You've now made three films together. What's your favorite behind-the-scenes tale about the making of these movies?**

**Pegg:** I broke my hand on *The World's End*, and Edgar and I did another six takes on top of the broken hand—doing the same thing that broke it in the first place. One of our camera operators who was on set could see that I was getting whiter and whiter. Nick did the same thing on another film, actually. I don't know what it is with breaking bones; it's just something we like to do.

**So can you tell us how the final Cornetto will appear in *The World's End?***

**Frost:** You'd have to pay me a million Cornettos. By now the company that makes them has brought out four or five different flavors, so there's talk that we might have to make an octology just to cover them all.
THE BRITS ARE obsessive about preserving tradition—even the ancient practice of leafing through newspapers. The British Library has 750 million pages of newsprint spanning 300 years, and while it digitizes some 4 million pages a year, it’ll be 188 years at that pace before the whole collection is accessible on an iPad. To keep the news rags of a bygone era in circulation, the library has built a storage facility in Yorkshire with a microclimate specially created for aging newspapers: low oxygen to prevent fires, low humidity to prevent rot. But low oxygen also means no people. Once the collection moves inside in 2014, humans will be locked out—requested papers will be delivered by a robotic shelving system. Three cranes, programmed with the precise location of every volume, will travel along the floor on rails. When a patron asks for an 1893 Sunday Times, a crane with mechanical fingers delicately retrieves the appropriate tray. The tray is then placed on rollers that whisk it to an air lock, which seals off the storage void before opening into a service center next door. Every evening the day’s haul is packed onto a truck, and within 48 hours of a request, a paper from the distant past arrives in the reader’s local library. Not exactly Internet speed, but if you think of it as a robotic-retrieval time machine, two days ain’t so bad. — SARA BRESelor
Keep certain chemicals apart. Acetylene must be separated by at least one container space or bulkhead from chlorine; barium cyanide must be isolated from acids.

Every box has an ID number. It shows the owner (A) and category (C) of the container, followed by a serial number (E) and check digit (V). Once they're loaded, a separate system locates each container by bay, row, and tier.

Place flammable stuff away from the edges. If a ship will be traveling through, say, the Indian Ocean, containers of combustible material could be ignited by rocket-propelled grenades from attacking pirates.

Heaviest boxes go down low. This prevents the stack from collapsing. And they're distributed as evenly as possible to keep the ship balanced.

Minimize the number of crane moves. Algorithms and computer systems help plan the most efficient and practical storage schemes so ships can get in and out of port fast.

Cold boxes need juice. Refrigerated containers—or "reefers"—must be placed near a power source.

Guard your vessel. Containers are sealed after inspection, but thieves can use simple tools to get around the seals and pop open the doors.

HOW TO LOAD A CONTAINER SHIP

CONTAINER SHIPS are the pack mules of global trade, and journalist Rose George's new book, Ninety Percent of Everything, is the latest look at how the steel boxes full of solids, liquids, and gases get to where they're going. One huge challenge, George says, is simply loading and unloading these giant ships, a task that calls on physics, chemistry, and a knowledge of pirate tactics. - BRYAN GARDINER

How to Evaluate Sources