COMMUNITY MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES
> (Aboriginal/Indigenous Experiences, Current Case Studies, Virtual
Community
> Visions)
>
> Linda K. Fuller (ed.)
>
>   The techno-globalist ideology, which encourages illicit
> influence-
> peddling in the great international organisations where the new
> planetary order of communications networks is being discussed, also
> nourishes visions of a transparent and egalitarian ?communication
> society.? It further contributes to blurring the issue of power by
> ignoring the differentiation among societies and the existence of a
> balance of forces among them, and by shunning the collective
> interest.
> --Armand Mattelart (1999,
> p.5)
>
> Historically, it has been argued that ever since the Bible was
> translated
> into
> the vernacular that a clamor began for access to message-making; now, in
> our
> current era of revolutionary information changes throughout the world, it
is
> critical to consider the role of community media toward that process. The
> definitions may have been altered, but the aim remains the same.
> Access, for example, can refer to cable television programming that
> is
> public,
> educational, and/or governmental (PEG), prepared and delivered by private
> citizens or nonprofit groups and institutions on a first-come,
first-served
> basis. Or it might refer to ideological, cultural, even physical
individual
>
> or
> group involvement in media that could include print, broadcasting, and/or
> any
> number of existing or emerging technologies. Jan Van Cuilenburg (1999,
> p.185)
> supplies this definition of access to communications: "The possibility
for
> individuals, groups of individuals, organizations and institutions to
share

> society?s communications resources, that is, to participate in the market
of
> communications infrastructure and distribution (message delivery)
services,
> and
> in the market of content and communication services." Public access in
its
> purest form operates non-hierarchically, produced by artistic,
> advocacy-oriented
> volunteers. Analogies have been drawn between Gutenberg?s invention of
the
> printing press in the 15th century and the innovation of community media
in
> the
> 20th in terms of citizen access.
> Describing Public Access to the Internet, co-editor James Keller (1996,
> pp.34-35) points out how it is "entwined in matters of technology, law,
> economics and, increasingly, sociology and organizational behavior. By
> public
> access we mean not only establishing physical connections to the network,
> but
> also ensuring that those connections are easy to use, affordable, and
> provide
> access to a minimum set of information resources." King and Mele (1999,
> p.604),
> redefining traditional notions of the public sphere such that local
> citizens,
> from various backgrounds, are included, state:
>   In a medium otherwise dominated by advertisements, canned
> programming and audience-tested newscasting, public access offers
> possibilities to probe and address topics and concerns underrepre-
> sented in mainstream media. Most media activists envision public
> access channels as electronic public spaces where issues and
> concerns
> central to local communities are brought to the fore and
> democratically
> resolved through discussion and dissemination. They see public
> access as not only critiquing commercial television but challenging
> it.
> Considering mass communication as public, Hollander and Stappers (1992,
> p.19)
> decide, "Community communication is then a form of public communication,
of
> making public and creating a public within the context of a specific
> community
> (geographical and/or community of interest)." They identify three

empirical
> research approaches: localism-cosmopolitism, integration or community ties
> approach, and community structure; then, they call for an integrated model
> that
> allows for the dynamics of local media interacting with local people in a
> community context. Dov Shinar (1994, p.1) offers this conception of spatial
> maps for local and community media:
> 1. "Economic/civil space," between, rather than in, the traditional
> state/market
> borders;
> 2. "Social space," between, rather than in, social networks defined by newer
> technologies, that are too big or too small and thus socially irrelevant;
> 3. "Political space," between, rather than in, the current tribal "Jihad"
> and
> global "McWorld."
> Participatory action, which focuses on the social scientific method
> of
> observation and insight, can inform the process of change. Historically
> extended to Aristotelian notions of self-reflection, it relates to the Greek
> notion of "praxis," and hence is equated with the idea of critically
> informed
> practice. Philosophically, the roots for community media are grounded in
> John
> Stuart Mill?s social libertarian theory; practically, the skills accrued
> from
> involvement with one?s media are critical to accomplishments toward media
> literacy, even to empowerment (Higgins, 1999).
> Community communications/media as a concept referring to how
> individuals and
> organizations involve publics in participatory means of airing issues takes
> many
> different forms, depending on time and place. Lauding its provision of
> access
> and opportunity so that citizens can help determine community development,
> Crispin C. Maslog (1997, p.3) cites these characteristics of community
> media:
> 1. Owned and controlled by people in the community;
> 2. Usually smaller and low-cost;
> 3. Provides interactive two-way communication;
> 4. Non-profit and autonomous, therefore, non-commercial;
> 5. Limited coverage or reach;

> 6. Utilize appropriate, indigenous materials and resources;
> 7. Reflect community needs and interests;
> 8. Its programs or content support community development.
> While it may be difficult to pinpoint when and where the notion of
> community
> media began, the phenomenon in North America, notably Canada and the
United
> States, started in the 1970s (Pool, 1973; Gillespie, 1975; Kellner, 1992;
> Fuller, 1984, 1993; Engelman, 1996; Linder, 1999; Starr, 2000). It soon
> caught
> on in Europe (Jankowski, Prehn, and Stappers, 1992; Lundby, 1992; Rushton,
> 1993;
> Spa, Garitaonandia, and Lopez, 1999) and other pockets around the world,
but
> still is just now catching on in developing countries. Most of the
research
>
> on
> community media has related to television (Avery, 1993; Fuller, 1994), but
> other
> global programming efforts deal with radio (Girard, 1992; Hochheimer,
1992;
> Land, 1999), video (Alvarado, 1988; Aufderheide, 1993; Renov and
Suderburg,
> 1995; Fontes, 1996; Ross, 1999), and other forms for delivering messages
> that
> can help develop community identity (Ramirez, 1986; Lewis, 1993; Riano,
> 1994).
> At root is advocacy and activism, dating to a legacy from the 1960s that
> continues to the present (e.g., Bobo, Kendall, and Max, 1991; ROAR, 1991;
> Ryan,
> 1991; Boyle, 1996; Hazen and Winokur, 1997; Wayne, 2000).
> It seems appropriate to give some background to how this book has
> evolved.
> As
> the author of Community Television in the United States: A Sourcebook on
> Public,
> Educational, and Governmental Access (Greenwood, 1994), I have long wanted
> to
> extend that study to include wider efforts. When Carlos Fontes, who had
> done
> his dissertation on the topic of alternative media, joined the faculty at
> Worcester State College, I suggested a collaboration; although he was
unable
>
> to

> continue as co-editor, his early ideas and continuing support have been
> invaluable and he is working on a chapter relative to alternative video in
a
> global context.
> Cooperation also has come from members of the Community Media
> Working Group
> of
> the International Association for Media and Communication Research
(IAMCR),
> the
> International Communication Association (ICA), the World Communication
> Association (WCA), the Union for Democratic Communication (UDC), and the
> international division of The Alliance for Community Media. Potential
> contributors were encouraged to delineate the phenomenon of grassroots
> broadcasting/narrowcasting and video efforts in their areas, incorporating
> examples that included historical, economic, political, ideological,
> socio-cultural, and/or anecdotal case study reportage where available.
> Audience, advocacy, producer, and administrative considerations were also
> encouraged.
> Responses to the Call for Participation in this project yielded a wide
range
>
> of
> interpretations and examples that, in the end, became an editor?s dream.
By
> their very nature, they divided themselves into the following divisions:
> aboriginal/indigenous experiences, current case studies, and virtual
> community
> visions. Despite the initial plan for extending my own research on
American
> community television to include other global efforts, it soon became clear
> that
> the state of community media around the world is in some instances in a
> process
> of evolution, in others more like revolution.
> My family teased me when a reviewer labeled my work
> "neo-Habermasian," (see
> Habermas, 1965, 1990) but the notion of commitment to communications
> applications in the public sphere does, in fact, guide my scholarship.
Many
> of
> the scholars represented here also agree on the need for access to and
> education
> about information that affects the public good. Public service
> broadcasting,
> we

> contend, should be an institutional guarantor; it is why we fear and fight
> against the trend toward media ownership by a handful of moguls who want
to
> mediate our messages.
> What follows is a brief description of some of the chapters already
> in place
> for
> this book, organized into the categories that inform the subtitle for
> COMMUNITY
> MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES: Aboriginal/Indigenous Experiences,
> Current
> Case Studies, and Virtual Community Visions. Alphabetically, they include
> reports on the Asian Pacific region, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium,
Brazil,
> Bulgaria, Cameroon, Finland, France, Ghana, Israel, Japan, Mexico,
Namibia,
> Native Americans, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the United
> Kingdom, and a number of other general areas and visions.
>
>   1.Aboriginal/Indigenous Experiences
> As we enter the new millennium, replete with sophisticated
> technological
> advances that continue to dazzle us on a daily basis, it stops us to learn
> about
> communities that are just beginning to learn how to use their own media to
> communicate within and amongst themselves. Distinguishing between
> indigenous
> and ethnic media, the former characterized by having inhibited an area or
> region
> and having sovereignty over it long before anyone else, Browne (1996)
makes
> a
> striking argument about how the dominant media distort rather than
preserve
> it.
> Korula Varghese (1995, p.144) argues that community access to channel
space
> on
> (often state-owned) broadcast networks in developing countries can provide
a
> sustainable alternative for community communication needs: "The emergence
> of
> the alternative paradigm and its emphasis on indigenous media, along with
> the
> associated criticism of mass media as one-way, centralized and expensive,
> have

> contributed to a virtual delegitimatization of the potential of mass
media
> in
> participative development." Although the literature on aboriginal and
> indigenous peoples working with their media is limited (Browne, 1996;
> Cooper,
> 1998; Daley and James, 1998; Alia, 1999), chapters here represent
> groundbreaking
> resistances to mainstream media hegemony.
> Australia: Joy Morrison?s "A Voice of Their Own: Indigenous
> Resistance to
> Broadcasting Hegemony" examines the broadcasting infrastructure that the
> Australian state provides to its indigenous minority of Aboriginal
peoples.
> Mexico: Analyzing the role played by video technologies in the
> Oaxaca
> indigenous
> communities, Carmen Gomez Mont reports on interviews with video artists as
> well
> as festivals and meetings that underscore the educational interplay
between
> new
> information technologies and local inhabitants.
> Native Americans: Ritva Levo-Henriksson of Finland?s "Media as a
> Constructor
> of
> Ethnic Minority Identity: A Native American Case Study" goes beyond media
> (mainly Hollywood) representations to report on her own first-hand
> experience
> with Hopis and Navajos in Arizona. Discussing how Native American media
has
> traditionally depended on oral communication to promote native language
and
> culture, she concludes: "To narrow the gaps and to develop understanding
> between native communities and the majority, mainstream culture, they must
> find
> such cultural interpreters and media professionals in both cultures who
> understand the nature of technology and the cultures and aims of the
people
> of
> native communities."
>
>   2.Current Case Studies
> At the heart of interest in community media are lessons learned and
> models
> for

> success that might move us from theoretical to practical applications. Of
> particular note is a running theme on the role of language and culture, as
> evidenced in the chapters on Belgium, Finland, Spain, and Switzerland.
> Asian Pacific region: Saule Barlybayeva and Alma Rustemova of
> Kazakstan
> apply an
> important overview of "Features of Asian Community Communications,"
> particularly
> as they relate to emerging technologies like cable television and
satellites
>
> and
> what this all means in terms of a lessening of censorship and increasing
> citizen
> involvement in media.
> Bangladesh: "Usefulness of Television as an Agricultural
> Information Medium
> Among Farmers: An Empirical Study from Bangladesh," by M. Abul Kashem,
> presents
> a classic example of how broadcasting can be operationalized for citizen
> betterment.
> Belgium: Frieda Saeys and Tomas Coppens tell quite a story in "The
> Short
> Life
> Span of Community Broadcasting in Belgium." Tracing the role of radio and
> television in terms of government dictums and the three Belgian
> cultural-linguistic communities, theirs is a critical cautionary tale.
> Brazil: Rogerio Santana Lourenco, reporting on his experiences with
> the
> Brazilian Association of Popular Video, highlights the role of video
> production
> as discourse in his chapter, "Video-Identity: Images and Sounds of
> Citizenship
> Construction in Brazil."
> Finland: Tom Moring, author of "Better Served or Better Hidden?
> Digital Radio
> and
> Television Services for Three Minorities in the Nordic Countries," writes
> here
> about the role of Swedish-speakers in his country
> France: "Television Channels and Regional Spaces in Europe," by
> Jacques
> Guyot,
> points out how regional or local dimensions have become factors as
national
> television systems continue to be called into question. Using what

> sociologist
> Marc Fumaroli refers to when he says that French television is "the other
> wing
> of the Cultural State," Guyot outlines the political foundations of
> television
> in Europe and traces the roles of audiovisual groups in terms of cultural
> identity and democracy.
> Ghana: Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh?s "Implications of Globalization for
> Community
> Broadcasting in Ghana" examines how the nature, content, and operation of
> electronic media systems in Ghana indicate "foreignization," or the
> domination
> of foreign values on its broadcasting practices. Frightening as his
> scenario
> is, it nevertheless offers a powerful argument for recognizing indigenous
> communication.
> Ireland: Sean O Siochru discusses implications for community
> television in
> "From
> Radio Waves to Digital Days," relative to a proposed Broadcasting Bill for
> Ireland.
> Israel: "Vox Populi or Fox Populi?Community Television Practice and
> its
> Future
> in View of its Implementation in Israel," by Hillel Nossek, offers a
unique
> idiosyncratic model and lessons. What began about ten years ago with
> broadcasts
> and programs produced in Kibbutzim and then took a turn with the advent of
> cable
> television are brought up to the present.
> Japan: Toshiko Miyazaki, who has long followed the emergence of
> community
> media
> in Japan, includes the following in her chapter ,"Citizens and Media:
Three
> Case
> Studies on Public Access in Japan": survey research on video production by
> citizen groups and field research on both rural and urban community cable
> television stations. They demonstrate factors which lead people to or
> hinder
> them from expressing themselves in public, and how peoples? view toward
> society
> can change through experiences with media production.
> Nicaragua: Humberto Abaunza, Director Adjunto of Fundacion Puntos
> de

> Encuentro,
> describes projects his organization has done, using multimedia, to promote
> anti-violence and empower young people
> Singapore: From a participant observational perspective, Linda K.
> Fuller
> provides a description of Singapore?s first attempt toward community
> television,
> which she labels "the only example of its kind in the world." Government
> directed ("top-down"), its current status some four years later serves as
a
> critical case study.
> South Africa: Karen Thorne, president of Videazimut and a media
> consultant
> for
> the Media For Change Agency, has put together a document called "Towards a
> Sustainable Development Strategy," detailing South Africa?s "bottom up"
> struggle
> toward community media.
> Spain: "A Television to Save a Language and a Culture: The Basque
> Case," by
> Carmelo Garitaonandia, recalls the Belgian story on the role of language
in
> community media. Radio Television of the Basque Country (ETTB), created
in
> 1983
> to serve more than two million people, supplies some 5,600 hours per year
in
>
> the
> Basque language of "euskara," such that the media have played a key role
in
> normalizing its use in all areas of social life.
> Switzerland: "Probably the only country in the world where
> ?integration? and
> ?entertainment? are defined as main goals for radio and television in the
> Constitution," Swiss media is analyzed by Louis Bosshart.
> United Kingdom: Dave Rushton and Sandy Stuart of the Local
> Television
> Management
> and Production unit at Queen Margaret?s College Edinburgh present an
> historical
> and practical view of developments there.
>
>   3.Virtual Community Visions
> Inspired by the work of Benedict Anderson?s 1983 book Imagined
> Communities,

> interest has escalated with the introduction of the Internet and its
> capabilities for actually bringing together people with mutual interests,
> despite geographic limitations. Appropriately, most of that literature is
> quite
> recent (e.g., Kahin and Keller, 1996; Shields, 1996; Fuller, 1997; Hauben
> and
> Hauben, 1997; Jones, 1998; Sudweeks, McLaughlin, and Rafaeli, 1998; Smith
> and
> Kollock, 1999).
> A subset of this notion is the idea of community communication
> centers,
> bridging
> local educational, political, and social services (Bushong, 1995; Maslog
et
> al,
> 1997; Chow et al, 1998). Both governments and educational institutions
are
> learning the importance of investing not only in telecommunications
> infrastructure but also in citizen teleliteracy. Knut Lundby (1992, p.1)
> calls
> it a communication environment: "A socio-material and symbolic setting
for
> communicating people."
> Alliance for Community Media: Dirk Koning, executive director of
> the
> Community
> Media Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a model access center, has been a
> pioneer in this Washington-based organization that was formerly known as
the
> National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP). Active at both
> national
> and international levels, his perspective encourages us to move from early
> experiments with radio to sharing knowledge and context, equipment and
> technology, and transmissions "via cable, radio, Internet, fax, phone, ,
> ,whatever."
> Community Media Association (CMA): Steve Buckley, director of CMA,
> which is
> secretariat for the Local Independent Television Network , discusses not
> only
> the development of local television in the United Kingdom but also the
role
> of
> community radio around the world.
> Community Media Visioning Partners: Chuck Sherwood, co-partnering
> with
> another

> longtime practitioner in Public Access and Community Media, Rika Welsh,
> describes this new venture, which they call "Bridging the Transition."
> Working
> with nonprofit access corporations, franchising authorities, and the
network
>
> of
> other cable franchise renewal specialists in the U.S., Sherwood sees the
> convergence of cable, computers, and the Internet critical to helping
> transitions for new means of community media, with Internet TV and web
radio
> just the beginning.
> The Internet and the Future of Community Television: John Higgins
> considers
> community television as a social movement. His discussion includes
comments
>
> on
> "the increasing concentration of information and opinion in the hands of a
> few
> powerful media conglomerates; the shrinking of the public space as areas
> formerly open to and sponsored by the public become corrupted by
escalating
> commercialization; and the resultant decline in public discourse as these
> formerly public spaces yield to commercial speech; in short, the decline
of
> public democracy."
>
> Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA): John Barker, Regional
> Coordinator
> of
> the Campaign for Broadcasting Diversity for MISA, discusses the history,
> philosophy, and activities of the organization, with particular emphasis
on
> his
> home country of Namibia.
> Media Libre: Jeffrey Hansell and Nathalie Magnan have expressed an
> interest
> in
> surveying various collectives, pirate television stations, and media
centers
> throughout France, many which operate as viable alternatives for diversity
> even
> without public access channels per se.
> Open Channel: Christer Hederstrom of Sweden provides a challenging
> overview

> on
> national television in Europe, focusing on government ownership/public
> service,
> commercial aspects, and cultural imperialism. Next, he discusses the role
> of
> public access, tracing the development of Open Channels in Germany,
Holland,
> Denmark, Finland, Sweden, the U.K., Israel, Spain, Turkey, and France.
> Virtual communities: Concetta M. Stewart and Mary S. Pileggi, both
> of Temple
> University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, provide an invaluable framework
> for
> examining metaphors relative to global information infrastructure (GII)
and
> their social consequences for, as they say in their chapter,
> "Conceptualizing
> Community: Implications for Policymaking in a Cyberage."
> Visionaries: Susan Rutkowski and Bill Mosher report on their
> program, out of
> Suffolk University, to get students directly involved in community media
> work.
>
> COMMUNITY MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES represents the first
time that
> both
> communications scholars and practitioners have come together in a single
> volume
> for reportage on global efforts toward understanding and acting on media
> access
> at the local, grassroots level. While many perspectives are included, the
> overall concern is with individual rights and responsibilities toward
> indigenous, participatory communities. As growing disappointment and
> disillusionment with commercial media and its centralization by key
> multinational corporations combines with increasing concern over
> conglomeration
> in general, it behooves us to understand, appreciate, delineate, and be
> involved
> in our own local means of communication. Reporting on her experience with
a
> televillage community project in Grand Forks, North Dakota, Lana Rakow
> (1999,
> p.82) states: "We can bring our expertise in the history and theory of
> communication technologies to the table, along with our access to funding
> sources through grant writing and our knowledge of research processes. We
> can
> generate public discussion of the issues of public access and

participation
> both
> locally and nationally." That is the purpose of this book.
>
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