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From: Jennifer Rauch <jrauch01@astro.ocis.temple.edu>  
Subject: Dig.Comm. Draft Report  
Status:

I've drafted this report in three sections, per Jean's advice: a two-page executive summary, 10 pages of detailed conference proceedings, plus the optional Appendix (which can be completed after this report is edited since we only have three out of six speeches in hand). This is a rough draft and can probably be significantly abridged yet.

Also, we might consider circulating just a 12-page document and making the full-text Appendix available on-line. If we publish this on-line, we can create hypertext links to all the organizations mentioned (www.cemnet.org, www.cme.org, digitaljournalist.org, www.tupr.org, etc.)

I'm also forwarding this report to you in another e-mail as a ".doc" and ".rtf" attachment so that it may be printed out more easily.

Jennifer

*Send draft to  
Greenberg? Reaching*

--DRAFT --

Report on the Bell Atlantic-Temple University Conference on Digital Communications  
"The Challenge of the Digital Age: A forum of diverse perspectives"  
Convened June 3-5, 1999 at Sugarloaf Conference Center of Temple University

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The digital age is upon us, bringing the ability to transform any information into computer file format and to access, store, manipulate and transport such information on demand. This new age of virtually unlimited access to unlimited information is reshaping the world around us and changing the global landscape. Digital technology is changing forever how the global community communicates and interacts. The rapid growth of this technology has provided policy makers, industry consultants and social analysts with the challenge of regulating, charting and understanding its development.

The demands of globalization have necessitated mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances between media organizations and the technology industry. Network television and telephone companies are acquiring cable stations; computer hardware companies are developing digital-communication hybrid devices; software companies are becoming Internet providers.

Could the effects of this convergence and the demands of the new media marketplace be homogenization and sterilization of content? Or could they result in greater diversity and increased access to information for every citizen? Is the new media environment more interactive and empowering, or

is it just an easier way to deliver customers to the marketplace? How can we secure a future in which ~~all~~ citizens have equal access to information? These are a few of the important questions that the Bell Atlantic-Temple University Conference on Digital Communications ~~conference~~ addressed.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a forum in which leading media and other industry executives, members of the creative community ("content providers"), community leaders, and scholars could address a variety of issues concerning digital communications. The 50-odd participants included representatives of research foundations, private communications companies, telephone service providers, public television stations, media advocacy and watchdog groups, individual artists, independent television production companies, and educational institutions.

Dr. George Gerbner, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunications at Temple University and dean emeritus of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, was chief architect of the conference.

Gerbner has demonstrated his commitment to diversity as director of the Cultural Indicators Project, which has analyzed prime-time network TV dramatic program content since 1967, and as president and founder of the Cultural Environment Movement, a non-profit coalition of more than 250 independent organizations and individual supporters, working for gender equity and general diversity in media ownership, employment and representation.

*and producing a product "Diversity Index" He is also*

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Gerbner conceived ~~of~~ <sup>forum</sup> this conference as a rare opportunity for people with different interests who live and work in the same cultural environment to meet, dialogue and develop specific recommendations on how to foster diverse perspectives in digital communications. Although not a formally organized 'body-politic' with the authority to act as a unit on the outcomes of the conference, each member of the group has taken the ideas that came out of this shared dialogue back to their own organized entities, to act on as they so choose. The results of this conference also will be publicly circulated by means of this report, press releases, newspaper advertisements and an edited videotape of the conference.

*See report*

~~This forum~~ <sup>plan for the conf</sup> was developed during a strategic planning session on November 20, 1998, in which Dr. Gerbner posed the challenge of exploring how the explosion in digital communications can provide greater equality of access instead of further concentration of power. At that session, Patricia Beadling, vice president of external and public relations at Bell Atlantic-Pennsylvania, ~~commented on~~ <sup>commented on</sup> how the telecommunications industry is changing and ~~on the difficulties in keeping up with these changes.~~

*described*

*B-A's effort 2*

The Digital Communications conference was convened by Dr. Gerbner, Ms. Beadling and Corrinne Caldwell, Temple's vice president and acting provost. The proceedings were moderated by Dr. Jean Moore, associate professor emerita in social administration at Temple and host/executive producer of "University Forum" on Temple University Public Radio. The conference was coordinated by Linda Greenwood, a Ph.D. candidate in Temple's mass media and communications program, and recorded by Jennifer Rauch, a graduate of Temple's Master of Journalism program and editor of the Temple Times.

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~~With an emphasis on freedom of expression,~~ The program was organized to encourage active participation and full involvement by every member of the group. All were invited to present formal conference papers, as well as to take part in informal discussions following each presentation. A total of six papers (printed in full in this report's Appendix) were presented: Dr. Howard Myrick of Temple University and Clay Steinman of Macalester College

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discussed the social, political and economic challenges of the digital age; Jeffrey Chester of the Center for Media Education and Dirck Halstead of The Digital Journalist talked about the challenges to the family, community and media; Dr. Edward S. Herman of the University of Pennsylvania delivered the keynote speech on the eroding public sphere; and Richard Somerset-Ward of the Benton Foundation spoke on the challenge to public telecommunications.

The group discussion resulted in agreement that the digital communications industry's profit motives marginalizes our country's democratic soul, and on the need for government to play some role in fostering greater access to digital media and diversity of ownership and content. Conference participants agreed on some recommendations: that the public needs education on the benefits of diversity, on getting access to digital media, and on using it in a meaningful way; and that partnerships with private industry and public institutions can help develop greater support for access and content diversity.

## II. FORUM PROCEEDINGS

The conference proceedings were recorded by hand, audio and video.

Welcome (Ms. Patricia Mugler, Bell Atlantic)

Ms. Mugler is \_\_\_\_\_ of external and public relations for Bell Atlantic-Pennsylvania, Inc. She is responsible for external and public relations activities throughout the state of Pennsylvania, including community relations, consumer affairs, educational relations, public affairs and local government relations.

Ms. Mugler described the digital age as an explosion resulting from the convergence of telephone, television and computer technologies. She said the Internet has undeniably gone mainstream, as 55,000 personal computers and 33,000 telephones are sold each day worldwide. The three challenges facing the digital industry, she said, were network connectivity, development of new uses and applications, and the full realization of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. Her organization firmly believes that telecommunications should be market driven in order to deliver the benefits of information more quickly to more people. She concluded that the Act provides for open, even-handed competition and less---not more-government regulation.

Conference Charge (Dr. Gerbner)

Dr. Gerbner noted that the digital age represents the greatest wave of mergers and consolidation in history. This presents both a great opportunity and the threat of reduced perspectives, points of view and sources of information-which could result in a serious undermining of democratic society. He said most Americans are not aware of this dilemma because there are no incentives for the corporate media or government to publicize it.

The Social, Political and Cultural Challenges of the Digital Age  
Papers Prepared by Howard Myrick and Clay Steinman  
(For full text, see Appendix)

Dr. Myrick is a media specialist, motion picture and TV producer, and broadcast manager. He has been chairman of the radio-television-film

departments at both Temple and Howard universities and was professor of mass communications at Clark College in Atlanta, Ga. Dr. Myrick also served as general manager of radio station WCLK-FM. His professional career in telecommunications encompasses local, national and international radio, television, film and multimedia programs. He was research director for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and is the author of numerous publications on media research, audience analysis and program evaluation. He also recently co-developed a nationally acclaimed TV-program rating system. Dr. Myrick holds a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in cinema, communications and educational technology.

Dr. Myrick said the jury is still out on whether the digital age will be one of diversity and access or of exclusion and inequality. He noted that we face three uncomfortable realities: 1) telecommunication industries are in the business of making a profit and are not interested in public service; 2) telecommunications policymakers are all white males; and 3) telecommunications companies are owned and controlled by global conglomerates that are bigger and more powerful than many nations. The primary challenge is to develop a new economic paradigm that reconciles profit and public service, said Dr. Myrick, who recommended four courses of action: developing programs to eradicate diversity gaps, funded by spectrum-use fees; converting libraries and public-use facilities into information highway on-ramps; installing public kiosks with affordable fees to guarantee universal access to the Internet; and establishing fax/email/www equivalent of the national 411 and 911 systems.

Mr. Steinman (Biography requested)

Mr. Steinman noted that our economic and technological environment is characterized by an intensified quest for profitability among companies. Long-term institutions are giving way to flexibility in the face of market demands. Convergence, vertical integration and synergies are all intensifying. The digital environment will spread to where the markets are, he said, as people spend more time in mediated environments (encouraged by technological developments such as high-definition television). The primary challenges are to encourage diversity, to serve marketing segments that are not profitable, and to provide international markets with greater alternatives. Mr. Steinman's key recommendation was to promote non-market institutions that cherish diversity.

#### Discussion

In the discussion following Dr. Myrick's and Mr. Steinman's presentations, the group agreed that political, cultural and socioeconomic diversity is lacking in the media. Furthermore, the emerging monopoly over content and delivery is unprecedented, and diversity in ownership and content have both suffered from consolidation.

There were also several points of agreement regarding profit motives in the media, especially now that spectrum allocation is no longer based on public interest. Notably, that "costs per thousands" (CPMs) control programming; that what consumers choose isn't necessarily what they want but a choice among limited offerings; that corporations have little interest in expanding diversity and access; that corporate profits should not be equated with public satisfaction; and that focusing on profits marginalizes our "democratic soul."

While we need to increase access to technology, the group noted, just providing a computer (the means) doesn't automatically translate into civic

participation (the end). How do we enhance democratic thought and consciousness of civic values to counterbalance consumerism as the dominant paradigm in communications? The challenge in the digital age, it was agreed, is to respond to new technological innovations and new forms of capitalism with new forms of social struggle. Yesterday's rules and ideas are not necessarily still applicable to today's media world.

The discussion explored the respective roles of industry, consumer and government in fostering telecommunications diversity. A major point of disagreement regarded the need for and efficacy of government intervention in the market. Some argued that corporations will need to voluntarily embrace diversity to thrive, that regulation can be counterproductive and stifle good programming, and that new technologies such as the Internet inherently encourage content diversity and defy regulation (e.g., thousands of new content providers will be doorways to advertising markets).

Other participants dismissed "technocratic fantasies" and argued that because the prevailing market forces fuel monopoly growth, only government agencies have the potential to effectively encourage diversity of content and ownership. Without regulation, telecommunications will continue to move in the direction of monopoly. The FCC can provide guidelines for diversity and foster competition, some said, so we must build a political base for regulation.

Among these varying levels of regulatory optimism and pessimism, a successful point of moderation was that since we do live in a regulated media environment, perhaps the question should not be stated as "Regulation or no regulation?" but rather "What kind of regulation?" It was also suggested that regulation of delivery and of content should be considered as separate issues.

Conference participants reached consensus on two recommendations: increased access and public awareness. Programs to ensure open access to technology and information must be put in place soon before monopoly systems are entrenched, they agreed. We need to build a public consensus on the benefits of diversity as well as educate youths and adults about how to get access and how to use it in a meaningful way. Educators can play an important role by providing motivation and training in the classroom. Public campaigns should focus on the neediest groups and avoid "preaching to the choir." We should aim to convert people in the public-at-large, in the government and in industry. In the case of the latter, public interest can be promoted as "in sync" with profit motives. Partnership with private companies and other institutions is critical; two possible approaches are establishing an industry-supported board where people (e.g. content producers) can petition for support and using this conference as a prelude to one with industry executives (e.g., Barry Levine, et al.).

Items requiring further discussion include: How do we reconcile different motives and agendas among non-homogeneous groups? How do we prioritize these many objectives? Can there be diversity within a monopoly? Should we try to block monopoly consolidation? Do we need new regulations to provide order, or does it suffice to hold government agencies accountable for enforcing existing ones? Where does the funding for public campaigns and diverse content production come from, and must state legislation be a prelude to funding?

#### Group Working Session

The session focused on specific actions that can raise awareness of

diversity challenges in digital communications. The agreed approach reflected multiple strategies among multiple groups. Civic groups (for example, CEM, Rainbow Coalition, Radio for Peace International, FAIR, WOW, schools, Parents TV Council, Consumers Union & Federation, nogatekeepers.org...) with a shared interest in seeking greater voice in both traditional and new media can build coalitions to work together, especially at the local level. In addition, they can seek leadership from academia, government (FCC, FTC...) and industry (Comcast, AT&T, Time-Warner, Bell Atlantic...).

Strategies could include on-line advocacy, petitions, letter-writing, PR activities and demonstrations, and membership in advisory boards. These efforts will build on existing ones to pursue incremental change and influence the media to reflect more cultural and political diversity and establish alternatives to capitalist structures.

The conference participants agreed to produce an official position paper, submitted to conference cosponsors, and to publicly circulate these results via press releases, newspapers advertisements, and an edited videotape of the conference. To do so, they will pursue grant and funding opportunities.

The Challenge to the Family, Community and Media  
Papers Prepared by Jeffrey Chester and Dirck Halstead  
(For full text, see Appendix)

Mr. Chester is a co-founder of the Center for Media Education and a nationally known expert on media policy issues. A former investigative journalist and filmmaker, his work has been featured on PBS, National Public Radio, and in numerous print publications. In the 1980s, he developed and managed the national media campaign that led to the creation of the Independent Television Service. In 1990, he co-founded the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression, an arts advocacy organization. He also created the Teledemocracy Project for Ralph Nader. In 1995, Newsweek named Mr. Chester one of the "Fifty People Who Matter Most on the Internet." He holds an M.S.W. in Community Mental Health from the University of California, Berkeley.

According to Mr. Chester, a publicly funded platform (the Internet) is now the basis for commercial enterprises and a powerful force on global markets and communities. The dominant telecommunications vision merges content and advertising to create a marketing system controlled by conglomerates. Whose vision does this environment represent? Mr. Chester said media companies have developed a "deregulatory regulated environment," embodied in the "free-for-all" that was the 1996 Telecommunications Act. Soon, the telephone line/ISP system will be replaced by broadband/digital; this will become the de-facto standard form of transmission. While telephony had to open to competition, cable may remain a closed system in which accelerating supermonopolies control content, delivery and technology (e.g., AT&T's deal to control 65% of all cable households). Monopolized content such as proprietary banks, bookstores, charities will leave noncommercial civic organizations out in the cold, and those without fast access won't be able to capture the public mind. We still have the power and responsibility to influence this dramatic transformation and leave an electronic legacy for our children and democracy. We have an opportunity to produce compassionate kids, whom corporations see as just a market. Mr. Chester noted that activism has yielded some successes: three hours of educational programming per week, the first privacy law on the Internet, federally guaranteed Internet access for schools and libraries. He recommended creating a positive alternative model that promotes citizenship, not consumerism.

Mr. Halstead is editor and publisher of the e-zine The Digital Journalist. He also helped found Video News International in response to the rapidly diminishing space in print publications for the work of photojournalists. The organization trained photo, print and radio journalists to use High-8 cameras to create a new kind of visual journalism. VNI is now NYT-TV, a New York Times company. Mr. Halstead is also senior White House photographer for TIME magazine and has a record 48 TIME covers to his name. He won the Robert Capa Gold Medal awarded by the Overseas Press Club for coverage of the fall of Saigon.

Mr. Halstead finds reasons for optimism at the edge of a paradigm shift that he calls the most profound change in humankind. He believes that commercial television can't control the market anymore, can't command its advertising rates any more and can't tell stories effectively anymore. Programming went downhill as companies got bigger, and it's gonna get worse, he said. The role of storyteller is becoming more important, and as television becomes cheaper to create, thousands of people are going to go out there to tell their own stories. The World Wide Web presents limitless space and lower technology costs that "level the playing field." Networks won't control editorial in a top-down manner anymore; they'll become aggregators/newsstands, not producers/publishers. Broadband will spur further migration of funding from print to the Web, he said. This new environment will better address social issues and give voice to those without. Mr. Halstead recommended that if we're smart and fleet of foot, we can represent our own interests and take charge of this new media environment.

#### Discussion

In the discussion following Mr. Chester's and Mr. Halstead's presentations, members of the group commented that the research being done on interactive programs is all proprietary, that children learn about their world through indoctrination by the media's unrepresentative representations, that a key battle in the digital age will be whether the model is open (as telephony) or closed (as cable), and that universities are reliant for funding on the corporations they're supposed to monitor and evaluate.

The group agreed that cooperation between independent producers and big players is possible, that goodwill counts among the assets of media corporations, that the future is being created by those with resources and leaving others out of the debate, and the telecommunications status quo will change. There was disagreement on whether the "level playing field" of the Internet is a technocratic fantasy. The essential observation was that we need a new paradigm founded on principles of diversity and access.

#### Group Working Session

The group working session discussed several possible methods of working towards this new paradigm.

First, they agreed we must determine what the public interest is: by performing research of documented market failures; by evaluating the impact and efficacy of commercial programming; by looking at real, broad-scale social problems and prioritize them; and by asking the public (i.e. surveys and focus groups).

Second, we must ensure diversity of voices in ownership, management and representation: by developing advocacy and awareness strategies; by

legislating a public NEA/NEH-type organization to distribute funds to underrepresented groups for production of content; by forming multicultural advisory boards; by making connections with like-minded groups; by re-engaging the FCC to promote public interest and diminish special-interest influence; by appealing to the corporate bottom line; and by working with politicians who support diversity.

Third, we must ensure quality content for children and youth: by making children's programming less subject to advertisers' control; by empowering children through media literacy in schools; by performing research to identify existing programs that work/don't work; and by forming partnerships with educational institutions and groups.

Fourth, we must make new technology affordable and ensure access: by providing schools with ample funding so they're not vulnerable to corporate support; by establishing foundations with corporate sponsorship a la Carnegie, Gates; and by pursuing the objective of universal digital service, as with telephones.

Fifth, we must nurture non-traditional programming: by supporting diverse foundations and grassroots groups to disperse power and promote even competition (no single group); by educating people in civic responsibility; and by founding community media arts centers, much as libraries.

Finally, conference participants agreed that the responsibility for educating the public about the digital age rests with industry, the government (FTC, Surgeon General, CDC, FCC, federal, state and local agencies), and the public sphere (nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations, foundations, schools, academic institutions) alike. Thus funding sources include service providers, by legislative edict; the corporate sector, by grants; government, via commissions and agencies; and the public (who pays for it all, through taxes and the advertising subsidy).

#### The Erosion of the Public Sphere

Keynote Speech by Dr. Edward S. Herman  
(For full text, see Appendix)

Dr. Herman is a professor emeritus of finance at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and an economist and media analyst with a specialty in corporate and regulatory issues as well as political economy and the media. He is the author of numerous books, including *Corporate Control*, *Corporate Power* (1981), *Demonstration Elections* (1984, with Frank Brodhead), *The Real Terror Network* (1982), *Manufacturing Consent* (1988, with Noam Chomsky), *Triumph of the Market* (1995), and *The Global Media* (1997, with Robert McChesney). His *The Myth of The Liberal Media: an Edward Herman Reader* will be released in fall 1999.

Dr. Herman focused on the eroding public sphere, where issues related to citizenship have traditionally been discussed. Participation in civic groups has declined due to the rise of television, a great distracter. He said public service broadcasting has been squeezed out of corporate media by the need to maximize profits. Advertisers don't have to exert an overt influence, he said, because market mechanisms already favor them. Broadcasting provides an environment that promotes consumerism and doesn't challenge basic capitalist assumptions. The FCC has ultimately been ineffectual and refused to stick its neck out. Dr. Herman noted an example of this failure: children's programming has diminished from 35 hours per week to 5 hours per week, in large part with toys/products integrated into

shows. Democracy rests on an informed populace, yet consumerism has superseded politicization as a priority among Americans, who display a lack of knowledge unique in the developed world. Dr. Herman suggested various approaches to solving this problem: redistributing broadcasting rights to the non-profit sector; taxing commercial use of public airwaves for the benefit of more diverse and local programming; revitalizing antitrust legislation; reviving the Fairness Doctrine and public service requirements; and encouraging micro (low-power) radio with licenses limited to local, single-station non-profit broadcasters.

Discussion

The political economy of the media was a central theme of the discussion, following Dr. Herman's presentation. He noted that the market is imposing its will with no public debate, and that consolidation results in even more insulation from control. Market actors do not take into account anything that they do not gain from, even if they do not lose anything (externalities, such as pollution) and the public stands to gain.

At a time when many in the United States are looking to the European model, European media are moving towards ours, one participant noted.

Dr. Herman discussed the "myth of the liberal media": with rare exceptions, all commentators are center-right on the political spectrum and do not criticize capitalist society or espouse change. Supposedly liberal news organizations, such as newspapers, routinely respond to advertising pressure.

Our only hope, Dr. Herman said, is to develop our own media (community radio, community papers); this is why the Internet is of interest and value.

The Challenge to Public Telecommunications

Paper Prepared by Richard Somerset-Ward  
(For full text, see Appendix)

Mr. Somerset-Ward is senior fellow of the Benton Foundation in Washington, D.C., and a consultant on digital broadcasting to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He was on the staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation from 1963 to 1984 and during his tenure served as BBC's director in the United States and as head of BBC Television's music and arts programming. Mr. Somerset-Ward is currently a television producer, writer and consultant on public telecommunications.

Mr. Somerset-Ward contrasted two pieces of legislation: the 1862 giveaway of 30,000 acres of public land--which made college education available to all, regardless of economic status, at land-grant colleges--and the 1996 giveaway of six megahertz of the digital spectrum to all broadcasting licensees--a \$70 billion gift largely to the private sector that served no clear public interest. He noted that no one has ever defined what "public interest" is, or how broadcasting can benefit individuals and communities (as opposed to private businesses). Public broadcasters have never been able to afford enough good programming, and soon must fill an even larger spectrum of channels. In the Digital Age, public broadcasters will be challenged to make a local impact in order to survive, he said. A new vision is taking hold in which public broadcasters will form alliances with educational institutions, state and local governments, civic organizations, businesses and media. Mr. Somerset-Ward suggested that the airwaves, a public resource, may be exploited not only for profit but also for the

public good.

#### Discussion

During the discussion following Mr. Somerset-Ward's presentation, the role of both public and commercial broadcasters in the new digital media environment was discussed. The National Association of Broadcasters was called the most successful lobby in the country, a natural alliance between broadcasters and politicians that resulted in the 1996 Telecommunications Act with minimal public debate.

Although commercial broadcasters are opposed philosophically to regulation, the group said, they support it whenever it promotes their own interests and adds to their competitive advantage. The current environment is already regulated, but in such a way that special interests run over public interest. The so-called free market is highly hierarchical and not a meritocracy; a handful of global corporations are essentially a "private ministry of culture" that regulates the market for its own gain and neglects their social contract.

Self-regulation does not work and must be imposed on commercial broadcasters, some suggested. Regulation can be a good, bad or mediocre, depending on how federal agencies do their job well. The government is more trustworthy than any other entities in our society, some said, and the FCC could effectively protect artistic expression without censoring or restricting it. Currently, enforcement of regulations varies considerably. Participants agreed that the government does have some role to play and that regulation can be useful in some form.

Public interest, however, has never been adequately defined; the Constitution forbids abridgement of freedom of speech but does not impose any positive requirements. Other countries' constitutions specify public broadcasting obligations to represent diverse points of view. Consensus was that we need to come to a common definition of public interest.

The group agreed that the media is experienced as an environment and is not an aggregate of conscious choices by consumers. Relying on individual agency-for example, "If you don't like violence, don't watch it"-is like saying "If you don't like the air quality, don't breathe."

Participants noted that public broadcasters could shine bright in the new digital world. For example, they have a vast library and will have an easy time putting their new digital channels to use. It also was suggested that a national feed to both television and the Internet could be introduced into public broadcasting. Public broadcasting also has an opportunity to rectify past mistakes, such as making enemies of natural allies by keeping its frequencies to itself and by competing for funding.

Other faults of existing public television were discussed: that only 17 of 350 stations have an evening news programs; that there is little competition in most markets; that original programming costs money and it's easier to take national feeds than to take risks. PBS disappoints by relying heavily on documentaries (in competition with A&E) and risks going down-market, some said. Public broadcasting does not have the funding or expertise to support 350 independent stations across the nation. It's currently a \$2 billion business, of which only \$250 million goes into national programming. The rest goes into overhead to support 350 separate staffs and studios, some of which are only used for pledge campaigns.

The merits of various funding sources were debated: corporate grants, public pledges, spectrum-use fees, government allocations, nonprofit grants, license fees, paid commercials. A promising alternative, now that channels are no longer scarce, is for PBS stations to sell excess channel capacity at fair market value and turn the profits over to a fund for community organizations to produce content. Another strategy that could be pursued is "play or pay"-if broadcasters opt not to serve the public interest, then they could pay into a fund to help others do so.

It was agreed that under-served communities need better television programming (including dramas, which bring a staple audience, not just discussion and documentaries), more advocacy and public awareness, and more education about alternatives. Media literacy, media training and distance education/on-line learning can work together to achieve these ends. Public-access television is also a promising solution, provided the necessary funding and expertise are provided.

While public television is not adequately planning for the digital deadline of 2003, one-third of its existing executives will retire in the next three years, a situation which promises new ideas. The future use of high-definition television and multicasting is not clear; it would make sense for PBS broadcast HDTV only in prime time and multicast during the day.

#### Closing Remarks (Dr. Gerbner)

Reflecting on his commitment to political and cultural diversity, Dr. Gerbner noted that he grew up in a fascist country-pre-World War II Hungary-and is motivated that those conditions never arise again. He also stressed the importance of storytelling, which is what distinguishes humans from animals, and said that the media increasingly supersede families and the church in telling these stories for us.

Now that we have the opportunity of a new system of communications technology, we should not let it damage democracy or social processes, Dr. Gerbner said. It is a technocratic fallacy to think that those with power will use new technology any differently than they did old technology-that is, to extend their own power. He said we must change the social structure so that technology is not used merely for the benefit of the few.

Dr. Gerbner suggested that the coming digital age offers the potential for greater diversity, for addressing the current monopoly of media ownership, employment and representation-in which women, young people and elders are greatly underrepresented by comparison to national demographics; in which minority representations perpetuate stereotypes; and in which portrayals of violence create feelings of insecurity among the public that lead to approval of more suppression, more jails and more capital punishment.

We must take advantage of the increased diversity that digital communication affords, he said, so that our children and grandchildren will live in a society that is more diverse, less violent and freer than the one we live in now.

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