Mass Communication: Living in a Media World

**Chapter 9 Overview**

Television was developed in the 1920s and 1930s by independent inventor Philo T. Farnsworth and RCA engineer Vladimir Zworykin. Commercial broadcasting began in the United States in 1939, but its development was put on hold by the outbreak of World War II. By the early 1950s, television was established as the dominant broadcast medium. Color television broadcasts came into widespread use in the 1960s.

Although early forms of cable television existed as early as 1948, cable did not become a significant medium until the early 1980s, when satellite distribution of channels became common. Among the early cable channels were a number of networks created by Ted Turner. Viewers gained access to additional choices in the form of VCRs and direct broadcast satellite service.

Television broadcasting is currently in the process of switching from analog signals to multiple digital formats, and VCRs are being replaced by DVRs, DVDs, and video-on-demand technology.

Television networks have been criticized for failing to include women and minorities in their programming, but cable channels have delivered more programming that addresses diverse interests. Networks have also been criticized for carrying too much violent and sexually explicit programming. But\ television has been praised for breaking down geographic and social barriers.

Broadcast television is currently going through a cycle where “indecent” content is being suppressed by the government.

Television is going through a rapid period of change, with audience members getting many new options to control how and when they receive programming. With VCRs, digital video recorders, interactive television, and broadband video, viewers can choose what they watch and when they watch it.

They are also able to interact with the programming through telephone and Internet resources.

**Your assignment for chapter nine includes:**

Choose your favorite television show and then answer the following questions on the discussion board. Please notify me when you have answered them there here by submitting an “assignment posted on discussion board” under the assignments tab.

1. What attracts you to this television program?
2. Which characters do you most enjoy and why?
3. What is the normal conflict for this program?
4. Is this show already converging with the Internet? If so, how? If not, what are ways in which it could?
5. What are your predictions about the future of this television program?
6. For what reasons do you watch television (referring to page 224 – 225 of your text) to be entertained, to learn or gain information, or for social reasons? Please explain.

**Please comment with each other in the discussion forum. Also feel free to add a clip of your favorite television shows.**