Mass Communication: Living in a Media World

**Chapter 5 Overview**

What makes a magazine special? This is a periodical that contains articles of lasting interest. Magazines are targeted at specific audiences. Income is derived from advertising, subscriptions and newsstand sales. The audience of magazines is more geographically enlarged than that for newspapers, which often focus on a certain town, county, or region.

The printing of the first magazines in America is a tale in itself. Benjamin Franklin planned to be the first with a magazine he titled *The General Magazine*. He asked John Webbe to edit it for him. However, Andrew Bradford stole Webbe away to edit his creation *American Magazine*. Bradford went to press three days before Franklin.

The *Saturday Evening Post* became the standard for early magazines, with its first issue on August 4, 1821. It was the first national medium, having readers in every state, and it appealed to a large, broad audience. In 1928, Leon Chipple described the impact of the *Post* this way:

This is a magic mirror; it not only reflects, it creates us. What the (Saturday Evening Post) is we are. Its advertising helps standardize our physical life; its text stencils patterns on our minds. It is a main factor in raising the luxury-level by teaching us new wants … But it does more than whet our hunger; by blunt or subtle devices it molds our ideas on crime, prohibition, Russia, oil, preparedness, immigration, the World Court … This bulky nickel’s worth of print and pictures is a kind of social and emotional common denominator of American life.

Magazine growth continued with the Postal Act of 1879, which allowed periodicals to be mailed across the nation with easy and little expense.

Magazines come in different types: consumer, trade, literary, commentary, newsmagazines, women’s magazines, and men’s magazines. As you read this chapter, you will learn about muckrakers, the seven sisters, and the top magazines today. Let me tell you, AARP has the top spot.

Body image becomes a big factor in considering the visual aspect of magazines, which we all know are purchased for much more than the reading value associated with them. You will read how Marilyn Monroe was a size 12 in 1953 when photographed for the debut issue of *Playboy*. Her measurements were 36-22-35. By today’s standards, that would make her a large-sized model. Your text mentions that few can obtain the 0 size of Jennifer Anniston. Elizabeth Hurley admitted that digital artists added five inches to her bust for a cover of Cosmopolitan. And a noted social psychologist explains, “We’re evolving toward an unnatural view of beauty, thin women with huge breasts and stick legs like those of a 12-year-old. What real women’s bodies look like is labeled wrong and unattractive.” Read more beginning on page 170.

As for magazine covers, one of the founding editors of *People* magazine established the following rules for covers:

* Young is better than old.
* Pretty is better than ugly.
* Rich is better than poor.
* Music is better than movies.
* Movies are better than television.
* Nothing is better than a dead celebrity.

Wow! Don’t you feel valued now?

And just for the trivial factor, all those little teasers on the front of magazines that encourage you to look inside are called coverlines.

Magazines have evolved over time to add a digital component as well.

**Your assignments for chapter five include:**

1. Watch the following Youtube clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U>

Dove’s campaign for beauty aimed to show real beauty. Some will disagree, saying that even Dove used Photoshop techniques on their models in their “beauty” campaign. Regardless, you can see that what appears in advertisements isn’t always reality.

After watching this clip, answer the following question on the discussion board. Make sure to comment on the posts of at least two other students.

How do media image portrayals effect youth – specifically teenage boys and girls?

Feel free to share experiences with your children or others you may know, without naming names, though.

1. Choose a magazine you enjoy (or one you can temporarily enjoy if you don’t normally look at magazines. Analyze the content of the magazine. Begin with advertisements. How many advertisements are found inside? What type of advertisements (categorize them according to your own system) do you find?

Next, examine the front cover. What does it look like? How many coverlines are on it?

Finally, examine the articles. Classify them into a category system and note how many of each category are found.

Submit this portion of the assignment to me under the assignment tab in a Word document attachment.

**NOTE: Part one will be answered on discussion board and part two posted under assignment tab.**