

Books Review

ALCOLEA, G.

La televisión digital en España. Seville: Comunicación Social, 2003.

With the future digital television bearing down on us, the author looks in detail at the process of digitalisation in Spain. Although quite new, the sector is having an increasing impact not only on the audiovisual sphere but also the area of social communication. With a markedly descriptive nature, the study looks at the origin and evolution of the digital platforms of satellite TV and in particular the commercial strategies and content used by Canal Satélite Digital and Vía Digital from when they launched in 1997 through to their merger in 2003. Among other considerations, the book shows that the high economic investments required to get the platforms up and running has mobilised powerful media and finance groups. It also explains how the rise in the number of stations has generated niche television, a certain degree of audience fragmentation and stiff competition for the rights to programmes considered strategic. In short, this book constitutes a fundamental look at the current situation of digital television in Spain and an attempt to decipher its future.

AZNAR, H.

Ética de la comunicación y nuevos retos sociales. Códigos y recomendaciones para los medios. Barcelona: Paidós, 2005.

The impact that journalism has on the representation of reality involves a number of social responsibilities that should not be ignored. Self-regulation, codes of conduct and recommendations on the treatment of information in terms of general interest are indispensable tools for putting this commitment into effect. The author presents these ethical concepts in the first part of the book, which is completed with a general bibliography. The second part is devoted to particular codes and recommendations classified by topics: personal tragedies, immigration, terrorism, domestic violence, handicaps, etc. Each chapter includes a presentation of the topic and a brief introduction to the document contributed (authors, main aspects and the occasional value judgements). The aim of the compilation is not to present a closed and definitive doctrinal work about the ethics of communication, but rather improve the way the media treats some of these major contemporary social challenges.

BALADRÓN, A.

Violencia y publicidad televisiva: de la violencia como recurso creativo a la publicidad como violencia. Murcia: San Antonio University Foundation, 2004.

The book won the 'specific topic' category of the Catalonia Broadcasting Council's 15th Mass Communication Research Awards.

Divided into three parts, this book proposes an approach towards the relationships established between advertising communication (in particular television advertising) and the phenomenon of violence. The first part includes a general look at the concept of violence and its dimensions, forming the theoretical basis on which the following chapters are based. It then examines the use of violence as a creative resource, in particular explicit physical violence. One section is devoted to the main theories about the effects of media violence and its application to the case of advertising. Finally, it takes a look at advertising as violence, or the violence of advertising. The author thus examines the features inherent to advertising communication itself, the implications of the use of technology as a key part of communication and the use of the image as the raw material on which all television advertising messages are prepared.

ÉCija, B.

Libro blanco del audiovisual: hacia una nueva política audiovisual. Barcelona: Écija, 2005.

Framed in the process of defining a regulatory framework for the Spanish audiovisual industry, this book aims to help resolve some of the questions still pending. The applicability of the definition of public-service television, limits on station numbers and media concentration and the creation of a Spanish regulatory authority are some of the issues tackled. The work, divided into eight chapters, analyses the television market in Spain and refers to public and private television, cable, satellite, local and digital television. It also examines the television frameworks in EU member states and the United States, showing models and references for our environment that could be useful when it comes to introducing changes to the sector. With the aim of becoming a hands-on and complete tool for audiovisual professionals, the book looks at models of funding television stations, as well as programming and regulations on content. Regulatory and control authorities are also analysed, as a way of materialising the need felt in both the International environment for an independent authority to manage a country's audiovisual policy.

FERRERÓS, M.L.

Enséñale a ver la tele. Barcelona: Planeta, 2005.

This book is aimed at parents and is a practical guide for teaching children and teenagers how to watch TV. It says that television is an educational tool and communicative resource of great utility, so long as it is used appropriately. It does not promote throwing the set out the window and in fact argues that rejecting the advantages of TV could even be counterproductive. The author structures the discourse in three parts. The first refers to the theory of learning and the importance of imitation. The other two provide practical solutions for learning how to use TV, starting from the hypothesis that it is just another household appliance, the function of which depends on the use made of it. The book provides a 10-point guide to being a good viewer and includes age tables (for children aged 1 to 20) with recommendations and tips on ways to promote reflections about television, the times children should be exposed to TV and the most suitable films. It ends with a series of television strategies (to raise self-esteem, promote imagination, teach children how to share, etc.) that could be chosen in accordance with the child's personality.

MILLER, T., YUDICE, G.

Política cultural (Cultural Policy) Barcelona: Gedisa, 2004.

Miller and Yudice present a document that examines cultural history and policy in the West, from feudalism through to the modern state, analysing the changes in the concept of knowledge. Culture, converted into a common good, involves the promotion of the diversity of expressions and the rising importance of cultural industries. In this regard, the authors defend cultural policies that strive for cultural diversity. The book devotes the first chapter to US cultural policy, particularly the National Arts Fund. It then examines the industries of the audiovisual culture, its practices and the institutions that generate and support production, distribution and exhibition, both in various advanced liberal democracies and a region of the Third World. Political systems and historical situations are given as key factors in assessing the impact of these policies. Planned cultural models and the experience of post-colonialism in Latin America form the basis of the third chapter. Finally, the book tackles the cultural function of museums and the global institutional framework of cultural policies, and the legal and economic agreements that determine the circulation of culture.