



In Brief

Some Facts on US Cultural Exports

- Entertainment is America's second largest export (after jet engines). It accounts for a positive trade surplus of four billion (ie US billion) dollars a year.
- Television makes up nearly half of this total.
- The majority of the entertainment export is split by the six major Hollywood studios. Time Warner alone makes a quarter of the overseas sales, distributing one billion one hundred million dollars worth of television programs and movies worldwide.
- American entertainment companies dominate 80 per cent of the overseas movie box office and just under half of all non-news television programming.

(Source: Ken Auletta, *TV's New Gold Rush*, The New Yorker, 13 Dec 93)



Smoother Access to Superhighway

With the President himself trumpeting the benefits of the information superhighway, the US administration has moved to streamline the regulatory framework with provisions to be included in a new telecommunications bill later this year.

The plan is to establish a simpler, more 'unified' legal structure for converging technologies which network operators will be able to use instead of complex and sometimes conflicting existing local, state and federal rules. Their use will however be conditional: they must agree to meet certain open access provisions which will allow other service providers to use their networks. (Screen Digest, Feb. 1994).



"It is deeply disturbing for intellectuals to discover that they can't make the most powerful medium yet invented work for them. It is even worse for them to discover that apparently inarticulate people, with no discernible ideas, can. When intellectuals make programs in their own image, viewers switch off....."

Alasdair Palmer, in a review of *Fuzzy Monsters: Fear and Loathing at the BBC*, by Chris Horrie and Steve Clarke, The Spectator, 19 February 1994.



Would-Be Narrowcasters Swamp ABA

The February issue of *ABA Update* reports that there are now more than 400 low power services with a backlog of over 600 applications. The ABA has proposed that the planning for services of not more than 1 watt be deregulated in order to relieve this situation.

Meanwhile, the question of what constitutes a 'narrowcasting' service is increasingly likely to cause headaches in the broadcasting regulatory system.

Narrowcasting could be defined in terms of audience size, the area of interest covered, the physical reach of the service, or other criteria.

The Federation of Australian Narrowcasting and Subscription Services (FANSS) represents the operators of low-power narrowcast radio services such as tourist services. FANSS suggests the following test should be applied, for narrowcast radio services at least:

Is the program to be transmitted by the proposed narrowcast service at present being provided adequately by any other radio service being received in the local market?

There are possible pitfalls even in this apparently simple approach: for example, how to interpret the word 'adequately'?



Pink: Colour of the Month

With Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras firmly established as an event on the national and international calendar and a major earner of tourist dollars, and politicians falling over themselves to endorse it, the message is getting through to less enlightened areas of the private sector that gay is OK.

A few large companies woke up a long time ago to the fact that there is a large and affluent gay and lesbian community out there to buy their products. For example, McDonalds last year ran a promotion through the gay press whereby they donated a percentage of each sale to an AIDS charity.

For others who have dragged their feet on marketing to the homosexual community, help is at hand. AIC Conferences, one of the two major commercial conference organisers, is holding a conference titled *Chasing the Pink Dollar* (Sydney, 27-28 April). 'Develop your own marketing strategy to target the lucrative and untapped gay market' shouts the brochure, suitably spot-coloured in pink.

Speakers include representatives of major ad agencies and marketing organisations as well as companies which have successfully sold to the gay market. Further information: (02) 210 5777.

