



Television: What's on, Who's Watching, and What it Means

George Comstock, Erica Scharrer

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Television: What's On, Who's Watching, and What It Means presents a comprehensive examination of the role of television in one's life. The emphasis is on data collected over the past two decades pointing to an increasing and in some instances a surprising influence of the medium. Television is not only watched but its messages are attended to and well understood. There is no shame in spending hours in front of the set, in fact, people over-estimate the time they spend viewing. Television advertising no longer persuades--it sells by creating a burst of emotional liking for the commercial. The emphases of television news determine not only what voters think about but also the presidential candidate they expect to support on election day. Children and teenagers who watch a great deal of television perform poorly on standardized achievement tests, and among the reasons are the usurpation of time spent learning to read and the discouragement of book reading. Television violence frightens some children and excites others, but its foremost effect is to increase aggressive behavior that sometimes spills over into seriously harmful antisocial behavior.

Key Features

- * Incorporates social psychology, political science, sociology, child development, and the growing field of communications
- * Presents tables and graphs clarifying theories and linking sets of data
- * Paints concise portraits of the role of television in entertainment, politics, and child-rearing
- * Contains background for dozens of lectures and articles
- * Contains a comprehensive bibliography of more than 1000 citations, many recent

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