

■ *Handbook of Media Management and Economics*. Alan B. Albarran, Sylvia M. Chan-Olmsted, and Michael O. Wirth, eds. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006. 750 pp. \$195 hbk. \$79.95 pbk.

We might never again see so many academic leaders on the business side of journalism gathered together in a single volume.

Comprehensive at 750 pages, this is the first handbook on the study of the business dynamics of mass media companies and their managerial foundations of technology, advertising sales, finance, marketing, and personnel. It is unique as a single resource summarizing existing knowledge in media management and media economics, and it should inspire other researchers to explore even further.

The *Handbook* is divided into four sections. Articles by thirty-four national and international scholars examine theoretical components, key issues, analytical tools, and suggested directions for future research. Researchers will especially appreciate the extensive bibliographies after each article and the detailed index.

Alan B. Albarran of the University of North Texas and Robert G. Picard of Sweden's Jönköping University start the book with overviews of historical research trends in media management and in media economics, respectively. Like most of the *Handbook's* writers, Albarran and Picard are widely published. Albarran is best known as the author of *Management of Electronic Media*, while Picard's sixteen books include *The Economics and Financing of Media Companies*.

The remaining twenty-eight articles are too numerous to describe here other than to say that they consistently show strong scholarship in each of the major subjects.

A few examples, to give an idea of the systematic range of topics and the quality of scholars chosen to cover them, follow:

- Philip M. Napoli of Fordham University, author of *Audience Economics: Media Institutions and the Audience Marketplace*, wrote the article "Issues in Media Management and the Public Interest."

- Douglas A. Ferguson of the College of Charleston, author of several books about television including *Media Programming: Strategies and Practice*, wrote "Industry-Specific Management Issues."

- Randal A. Beam of Indiana University, former head of AEJMC's Media Management and Economics Division, wrote "Quantitative Methods in Media Management and Economics."

Many of the *Handbook's* other writers are department chairs and long-time professors in media management or media economics, and some are from universities abroad. There's even one management consultant. One could always wish that authors and editors of other important books on media management and economics would have been represented, such as Ben Bagdikian, Robert McChesney, and Geneva Overholser—but you can't squeeze in everybody. Their books are referenced in the *Handbook*.

Despite all the writers, duplication is minimal because each is developing a different emphasis. For example, the debacle of the AOL-Time Warner merger is examined by eight writers, but all from different perspectives—one writes about the mega-media fallacy that bigger is *always* better, another writes about the effect of ill-planned mergers on shareholders, another discusses transnational motivations, and others analyze synergies of consolidation and convergence, and so on.

Articles frequently confront the extraordinary frustrations in researching the business side of media companies. Besides temporal validity due to personal reputations and corporate fortunes rising or falling abruptly, there also is pervasive secrecy in the business world—even to the point, as two Scottish scholars noted, that

"people and indeed documents sometimes lie."

A few writers wrestle with the effects on newsrooms, boardrooms, and the public brought on by the growing number of media companies selling stock on Wall Street for their financing. Regrettably, institutional investors forcing Knight Ridder to be put up for sale occurred after the *Handbook* went to press and could not be addressed.

There is a research irony in the field. Though many academics and professionals are wary of this trend to publicly traded media conglomerates, research would be more difficult if it were not for the details revealed in annual shareholder reports.

Albarran, the *Handbook's* lead editor, is the former editor of the *Journal of Media Economics*. Albarran wrote to the reviewer, "Our effort was to try and cast a broad net and assess the state of the field, as well as establish a research agenda that we hope will be a stimulus to graduate students and new professors who enter the growing MME [media management and economics] field."

Coeditors are Sylvia M. Chan-Olmsted of the University of Florida and Michael O. Wirth of the University of Denver. Among their accomplishments, Chan-Olmsted is author of *Competitive Strategy for Media Firms*, and, with Albarran, was co-editor of *Global Media Economics*, while Wirth has been publishing research in media management and economics since the 1970s.

The *Handbook* is not appropriate for an undergraduate textbook. However, citations of its articles are certain to start turning up soon in undergraduate term papers and in graduate and faculty research. It should be in every journalism and mass communications library.

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■ *Handbook for Research in Media Law*. Carol S. Lomicky and Trudy C. de Goede. Ames, IA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 228 pp. \$34.99 pbk.

Next semester my job will be much easier, my media law students will be less frustrated and more productive, and we'll have Carol S. Lomicky and Trudy C. de Goede to thank. The two have written a book that provides step-by-step instructions for doing media law research using LexisNexis Academic.

Lomicky, an associate professor in the Department of Communications at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and de Goede, a reference librarian at the same university, have designed this book for use in undergraduate media law or First Amendment courses. It's for students working on term papers, appellate arguments, or mock trial assignments. Recognizing that LexisNexis Academic is the most common online legal research database available to students at U.S. colleges and universities and that professors teaching media law seldom have time in a semester to teach legal research methods, they wrote a book students can use to learn the basics of legal research on their own. The book explains how to access court cases, statutes, and administrative materials and how to Shepardize cases using LexisNexis Academic.

While the book is designed for undergraduates, I'll use it in a class of new master's and doctoral students and with undergraduate honors students. I found it surprisingly readable for a how-to manual. The cases and statutes used as examples are all from the field of media law, and the book explains clearly and thoroughly how to use the database. For example, it demonstrates several different ways to access a court case—by party name, by citation, and by subject. It reproduces LexisNexis Academic screens and gives numbered instructions—step one, step two, etc. There even are instructions for

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