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**PRESS & TELEVISION**


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### *Give Them Science News*

"Readership and Coverage of Science and Technology in Newspapers" by Clyde Z. Nunn, in *Journalism Quarterly* (Spring 1979), 431 Murphy Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn. 55455.

What do newspaper audiences like to read about? According to Nunn, a Newspaper Advertising Bureau executive, more Americans are taking time to scan news of science and technology.

In a 1971 NAB survey, "science and technology" failed to make the list of the 17 subjects most favored by newspaper readers. Six years later, however, this topic ranked No. 11. And 32 percent of the science stories in the 1977 survey were rated "very interesting" by readers. By contrast, only 24 percent of all newspaper content received such high marks.

Adults under 30 years of age (the generation, Nunn says, that some observers claim have given up on science) are slightly more likely than those over 30 to rate science news highly. The difference (3 percentage points) is significant, he says, because young people tend to give lower ratings to newspaper content than do their elders.

In 1977, asked which subjects they would assign more space to if they were newspaper editors, adults under 30 ranked "consumer news" first, followed by "the environment" and "health/nutrition." (Science was not among the choices offered.) The over-30 group placed health/nutrition second—after "best food buys"—and the environment sixth (behind human interest stories, editorials, and consumer news).

The "average" newspaper did print more items on the environment and public health in 1977 than in 1971 (up .1 percent and .4 percent, respectively). However, the percentage of all non-advertising space given over to news of science and technology shrank, from 1 percent to .7 percent. Space for two notably unscientific features—horoscopes and puzzles—grew from 2.4 percent to 2.9 percent.

### *Women in TV*

"Women's Depiction by the Mass Media" by Gaye Tuchman, in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (Spring 1979), University of Chicago Press, 15801 Ellis Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Some feminist sociologists claim that TV news and entertainment programs perpetuate stereotypes about women's "place" in society. The networks' images of women will only change, they argue, when more women hold responsible positions in the television industry. Tuchman, a sociologist at Queen's College, N.Y., disagrees.

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*As feminists see it, television producers persist in presenting outdated images of women in American society.*



But some statistics seem to support the feminist position, she writes. A 1977 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights study found that, since 1954, women have accounted for only 45 percent of the people “presented on television” and 20 percent of those with TV jobs. (In fact, women now make up 52.4 percent of the U.S. population and 50.7 percent of the labor force.) Less than 10 percent of station-break announcements are made by women. Even in the “pseudo-egalitarian world” of soap operas, male characters dominate the drama; they, more than women, provide advice on “personal entanglements.”

Women are not yet on an equal footing with men in television’s corporate offices. “Evidence of discrimination in hiring and promotion,” Tuchman notes, “was strong enough for women employees to have won lawsuits or achieved substantial out-of-court settlements from each of the three television networks” during the early 1970s.

But, once in a position of responsibility, will television’s corporate women be quick to make changes? Women who wish to get ahead in the business, Tuchman says, are expected to support the company line, whether it is sexist or otherwise. Most important, future women professionals seem to have the same image of the female population that men do. In a 1977 survey of female journalism students, for example, the typical young interviewee described her own interest in politics as “unusual” for her sex. Most women, the students averred, prefer the traditional fare found on the “women’s pages” of newspapers.

*Electronic  
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“Your Money and Your Life” by David A. Cook, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (July/Aug. 1979), Subscription Service Dept., 200 Alton Pl., Marion, Ohio 43302.

Americans pay a high price for commercial television, argues Cook, an English professor at Emory University.

The business of television, he contends, is not, as popularly assumed, selling products to the viewer. Rather, it is selling potential consumers