

Media Today, 6th Edition

Chapter Recaps & Study Guide

Preface to the Media Industries: The Forces Driving Convergence in Media Industries

The first five chapters of the book provided the foundations for thinking about different aspects of the media, including convergence, genres, structures and funding, and media regulations. Expanding on the ideas of convergence, this preface provides some key themes that underpin the different industries addressed in the following chapters. Many of these themes began before digital media and the Internet, but convergence has accelerated their growth and change.

The Spread of Digital Media

- Digital media are devices with computer processors that allow access to textual, audio, and visual materials. Examples include laptop computers and tablets. (158)
- The Internet has accelerated the spread of convergence. (158-159)
- As much as the Internet has created opportunities for media, it also has created a lot more competition. With decreasing costs, almost anyone can create and distribute content. (159)

The Importance of Distribution Windows

- A window is an exhibition point used to generate profits on media content, such as a movie theater, a retail store, or an online store. (159-160)
- Moving content across windows is a way to increase revenues. (160) See figure p.1 on p. 160.
- Convergence offers an even greater number of windows than before. (160)

Audience Fragmentation and Segmentation

- Audience fragmentation, which began before the rise of digital media, refers to the splitting of audiences across the growing number of media outlets. (161)
- Channel fragmentation refers to this increase in mass media outlets, particularly during the last two decades. (161)
- With the introduction of each new means of accessing content, the audience using that medium gets smaller—a process called audience erosion. (161)

- Audience segmentation refers to the ways in which media producers divide audience members into groups, and create media that target these groups. Targeting involves reaching for desired groups that the media company has identified. More desired audiences get more attention from the media as a result. (162) See figure P.2 on p. 162.

Globalization

- Globalization is the movement of media content around the world. (163)
- Trying to reach global audiences is a way of making the potential audience larger and of possibly generating more profits. (163)
- Sending media content outside the United States poses a risk of global audiences not liking the content, so media companies might create divisions to address specific global audiences, or engage in coproductions, which is a deal between two firms for funding media material. (164)

Conglomeration

- A mass media conglomerate refers to a media company that holds stakes in several media industries. For example, Disney has its own television channels, film production facilities, radio network, publishing arm, and recording division. (164) See figure P.3 on p. 165.
- These conglomerates used to treat each production arm separately, but now companies require them to work together to generate more revenue. (164)
- Vertical integration refers to one company owning all the means of media content creation from production through exhibition. This system used to be illegal, but recent laws have changed to allow it in some industries. (page 165)
- Horizontal integration is ownership of multiple parts of media content creation across multiple industries and the use of these outlets to ensure a profit across them. (165)
- Synergy refers to the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. In this case, media industries use their various outlets to maximize exposure for their media products. (165).