telecommunication origins can bring important perspective in a changing environment to our national policy making and goals.

Through his scholarly research, Livingston has opened up a spectrum of neglected historical debate, discussion, and intercolonial policy bargaining that illuminates the foundations of the communication revolution in Australia and will be of interest to telecommunication bureaucrats, policy makers, and those involved in communication, constitutional law, history, comparative studies, politics and information technology. As we move towards celebrating the centenary of Australia's Federation, *The Wired Nation Continent* is a particularly timely contribution.

Reference

1. A. Moyal, *Clear Across Australia: A History of Telecommunications*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1984.

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Communication Traditions in 20th-century Australia

Graeme Osborne & Glen Lewis

Melbourne Oxford University Press, 1995, x + 195 pp., AU$22.95, ISBN 0 19 553511 1.

Not Just Another Business: Journalists, Citizens and the Media

Julianne Schultz (Ed.)

Leichhardt, New South Wales, Pluto Press, 1994, 243 pp., AU$19.95, ISBN 1 86403 015 1.

An historical retrospective requires both a decision about the period to be covered and the scope of that which has to be covered. The title of the book by University of Canberra academics, Graeme Osborne and Glen Lewis, indicates the time, but the issue of scope is more problematic. Early on they remind us the communications history of Australia involves the transport system, but this theme is not pursued. At the more recent end there is little on the internet. The main interests are the evolution of the role and policies of newspapers, film, radio, (traditional) telecommunications, and television. The focus is on public communication used for national development, for community building, for cultural expression, and as a means of exercising power for the purposes of societal control.

Their story is told in terms of five chapters: a neo-colonial nation 1900–20; national development and media monopolies 1920–40; cultural anxieties and the search for community 1940–50; 'just slightly different sorts of Americans'? 1950–75; communication and contemporary Australia 1975–93. Thus the study, one of a series of 'Australian retrospectives', provides an account of part of Australia's cultural history since federation.

The authors summarize this larger goal, in the title of their introduction 'making the people articulate?', about who has the right to speak in public, and about what—to say what is proper, what is reasonable, or what is loyal or disloyal.

However such issues are not solely settled by the public media. What people say among themselves is a form of articulation, much of which gets reported only belatedly through to the media, if at all. Since, say, the Second World War the media has had, generally, an extremely honourable record in regard to racism, a record which the private discourse of the public has not always paralleled. Sometimes that racism erupts into the public domain, to the dismay of those who thought the media reflected the underlying reality. Indeed, had the media realised this, rather than disguising the truth of the public reality from even themselves, they might have taken a more vigorous approach to challenging racism before the eruption.

Not only is the media subject to such outbursts, but the development of radio talkback has increased the public accessibility of the private dialogue. Regrettably the book devotes less than a page to radio talkback, and then mainly in terms of radio's adaption to the challenge of television. Yet talkback radio has probably done more to make the people articulate in the book's sense, than any other innovation in the last two decades, even if we are left uneasy about what the people have to say. That it succeeds is indicative of how conventional media, most evidently television, fails in that articulation.

Another form of public discourse the book hardly touches upon is that of the book, the magazine, and now the video, which are consumed in the privacy of the home, at the discretion of the individual. A nice example of their significance is evident in film producer Alister Barry's *Someone Else's Country*, which offers a radical perspective on the New Zealand economic reforms. The film was deemed 'unsuitable' for showing on the main television channels, and yet became a best selling video (sold, incidentally, through bookshops). Thus technological innovation limits the possibility of completely censoring dissidents from communicating with the public.

The technological revolution is at the heart of the deregulation which the authors report and puzzle about. For most of the history the media was either a monopoly, or with few substitutes and easily regulated. Today's new technologies undermine that simple world. Cable television infringes the uniqueness of the airways (and the free to air services), satellites offer an alternative to the traditional television transmitter and the international cable, cell phones undermine the monopoly of the telephone cable, videos offer an alternative to film and television, the internet provides an alternative source of news, information and comment, word-processor and laser printer are among the technologies which have made traditional typesetting and printing obsolete, and so on.

One does not have to be an economic rationalist to recognize the traditional regulatory framework is under pressure. Of course the old owners are invading the new technologies to protect their interests. Sometimes there is monopoly in the new technology (perhaps because of high costs of entry and exit), for others new entrants undermine the old providers. (Public owned providers are often prevented from going into the new technologies, because of a lack of capital, so there has tended to be an increased market share by privately owned providers, and pressures to privatize, the publicly owned.) Thus many of the historically useful issues which the study reports—such as media ownership—remained pertinent today, although they may be resolved in quite new ways.

Two contradictory views arise out of this technological dynamism (or, if you wish, shambles). One is to observe the high cost new technologies which appear to enable an increasing control of the media by a few corporations which have their own political agendas which are imposed, to some extent, on the general public. The other is to observe the low cost new technologies (such as radio talkback, the internet equivalents, videos) which give increased access to a public dialogue by the ordinary public. Somewhere between are those of us who are simply confused about any certainty.

Among the confused are the journalist profession. The title of Julianne Schultz's set of edited essays *Not Just Another Business* captures the ambiguity of the editor or journalist between the Charybdis of corporate owners and the select elite, and the Scylla of readers from the mass public. As well as three essays by the editor herself (a visiting research fellow at ANU), there are contributions by Rodney Tiffen, Donald Horne (who also provides an introduction), Paul Kelly, John Orr, Stuart Cunningham, Michael Meadows, John O'Neil and Catharine Lumby, Paul Chadwick, and Jack Waterford. There is not the space to report on the individual essays, which run from set topics, to practitioners reflecting on their journalistic realities. This is a lively committed debate. I found some of the practical illustrations of particular value.

All the contributors believe that news media is something more than a business, although one has yet to meet a profession—architects to undertakers—which does not make such a claim about its activities. Is the news media that different? To put the issue a slightly different way: to what extent should the activities of profession X be determined entirely by business considerations and to what extent are other regulatory procedures appropriate? The profession's answer too often is that it should not be subject to business disciplines (except in terms of the remuneration to which it is entitled), and that there should be some self administered code of conduct, which allows the professionals to do precisely what they want (subject to the public not getting so upset that they withdraw the right).

What is needed is that each profession step back and ask 'are we special or are there some wider issues?' More bluntly: what should be provided by exclusively commercialist mechanisms, and what should not? Donald Horne in a thoughtful introduction attempts one sort of answer, albeit not quite from this economics perspective. A brief summary is that the 'Ideas for Australia' program (of which this book is a part) is exploring the meaning of being an Australian as being a citizen who belongs to political community known as the Commonwealth of Australia. (I take it that in a different venue Horne would want to elaborate the implications of such citizenship. The notion of the 1972 New Zealand Royal Commission on Social Security of 'participating in and belonging to' one's community might be useful here. This leads to a wider set of necessary interventions, than just those involving the media.)

The citizens of a liberal-democratic community have to be able to 'theorize' (Horne's word) freely about what is happening, why it is happening and what should be happening next. Horne then uses the metaphor of the Greek *agora*, the assembly or market place (sic), to argue a similar role for the media, which makes it integral to the effective functioning of citizenship.

His concerns are not, then, very different from those of Osborne and Lewis, as he emphasizes the place for the discourse, the two its nature. Even so the history reminds us that once there was only one, or a few, agora (with journalists pretending to be sort of umpires, but in fact organizing the debate). Today agora are proliferating in ways we can only vaguely comprehend. Certainly there are more prominent ones, typically still under the stewardship of journalists and increasingly owned, it would seem, by private (and perhaps effectively foreign) corporations.

Thus both books describe a time and place of turbulence, although no more than elsewhere in the world. More confused than at any previous time? Perhaps yes. Admittedly there has been technologically generated uncertainty in the past—the implication of radio for the print media perplexed the 1930s (although as Osborne and Lewis remind us, there was no academic discipline then, and thus much less reflection). What is unique today is the number of new and unpredictable technologies arriving almost simultaneously.

Where perhaps this review has differed from the perspectives of the two books, is its emphasis on technology as a driving force. Certainly the cultural implications are important, very important. But they are being driven by engineering as well as commerce.

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Business Incubators in Economic Development: An Initial Assessment in Industrializing Countries

Rustam Lalkaka & Jack Bishop (Eds)

New York, United Nations Development Programme, 1996, xiv + 190 pp., US$25.00, no ISBN

This A4 format book reports on a study sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Private Sector Development Programme, which aims to assist governments and private enterprises to establish effective self-sustaining ventures in developing countries.

The book brings together studies of incubator programs in seven developing countries: Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland and Turkey. It is divided into two parts: Part One contains four chapters which summarise the role of incubators in small enterprise development; and Part Two contains the seven country studies. These studies were first presented to a specialist workshop held in the Peoples' Republic of China in September 1995. They were then modified prior to publication in response to feedback received at the workshop.

The preface outlines the general methodology for the study and briefly discusses the role of business incubators world-wide, noting the lack of firm empirical evidence to determine their role in economic development. A business incubator is defined as

> a controlled work environment designed to foster the growth of new and emerging companies (and) ... intended to create a collegial climate for the training, support and development of successful small entrepreneurial and profitable businesses. (p. viii)

There are approximately 1500 business incubators worldwide, an increase of five-fold from 10 years ago. Each incubator has approximately 10–30 tenant companies and Government agencies normally help to establish the incubator facilities and support their early operation.

The bulk of these incubators are in developed countries but around 250 are now operating in developing countries. Of these, 140 were surveyed for the workshop, so the data in this book can be expected to be representative of this group. The preface also notes that constraints of time and funding meant that the seven country studies used different specific methodologies, so the material presented is not always directly comparable, and some case studies go into more depth than others. The countries selected for inclusion in the study each had up to 3 years experience with incubator programmes. These experiences were both positive and negative so overall the book helps to fill some of the major gaps in our knowledge of the incubator as an economic tool.

Part One of the study (four chapters) provides an overview of the role of incubators. Chapter 1 opens by discussing incubators in the context of small enterprise development.