

Eli Noam's central argument is biased. He emphasises the vices of public service and the virtues of open television. Despite, or possibly because of, his background as a New York regulator, he has little positive to say about policy and regulation. His perfect solution seems to be the US system experienced in New York City, plus some modest regulation. He argues that there is "a place for" public broadcasting or valued programmes, but he wants any such effort to involve "additive policies of production and distribution support rather than by subtractive entry barriers" (p. 57). Some would say that this is politically naive; such additive policies are likely to be quite minor and may in practice mean the national elite merely supplying itself with a little high culture (financed out of the arts budget) and some serious politics (such as C-SPAN, subsidised by the US Congress).

Many, probably most, readers of Eli Noam's fascinating book will think that both the US and western Europe deserve something more than "additive policies of production and distribution support." We need less dogma and more recognition that each system of finance tends to generate certain types of programming. The challenge, then, is to find a policy strategy which does not allow one single form of funding to become dominant. Both the US and western Europe have found fruitful ways of combining different types of funding system. In Europe the challenge is to enable subscription to add to advertising and license fee finance.

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**Research on Domestic Telephone Use** edited by Ann Moyal with the assistance of Alison McGuigan. (CIRCIT, Melbourne, 1991), pp. 144, \$25.00, ISSN 1-034-7917.

Social research of the telephone has been, for too long, neglected. While there is considerable literature on the social impacts of radio, television and film, the telephone has been almost overlooked. Social research on that ubiquitous household appliance, that most often used means of interpersonal communication other than face-to-face interaction, has only in the past ten or so years been undertaken. And this work has been few and far between, under-reported and essentially unread.

In the past three years two major symposia have been devoted exclusively to the social uses of the telephone, the first at the Free University in Berlin in 1990 and the second at the Centre for International Research on Communication and Information Technologies (CIRCIT) in Melbourne in 1991. We comment here on the CIRCIT symposium. The proceedings of this symposium was edited by Ann Moyal with the assistance of Alison McGuigan. We comment here on this monograph.

John Burke of Telecom Australia stated these four desired outcomes of the Workshop: establishing telephone user research as an accepted area of research interest; establishing a 'tighter' perception and definition of purpose in policy terms; creating an understanding of appropriate techniques and methodologies;

unfolding opportunities for collaborative work within Australia and internationally for further work. While one cannot expect that all of these objectives were met, all were addressed and discussed at length.

Research from France, Germany, Australia and the United Kingdom reflected a variety of approaches, and, not surprisingly, drew similar conclusions about how people perceive the telephone instrument and its services and to what uses they put "Bell's Wonderful Toy". The quality of the work varied widely and the conclusions drawn from responses obtained via diaries and interviews ranged from broad generalizations to carefully thought out conclusions based on keen observations and careful interpretation of the data. While there are frequent lapses in methodological rigor, the value of this symposium was not so much in the reported findings as in several important issues that were raised.

The familiar dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research was raised and one can sense that there had been some heated discussion of this issue. It seems, to this reviewer, that this is a false dichotomy. Even the most dedicated quantitative researcher must admit that drawing conclusions about behaviour requires a healthy dose of speculation and 'qualitative' thinking. Data obtained via interviews and diaries are especially vulnerable to error; as Gerard Claisse and others have pointed out, changing the order of questions will often lead to different answers. And even the most dedicated of qualitative researchers must appreciate that quantitative approaches can sharpen and confirm their findings.

The very sensible comment was made that the rush to privatization of communications enterprises and to the marketplace when we have not yet determined how to meet the community service obligations of the media, may not be a sensible approach to policy making.

Finally, one of the most interesting discussions of the Symposium reported in the Monograph concerns the everpresent debate over the appropriate role of social research in policy making. There were those who believed that the competitive marketplace will solve all questions including how to meet the social obligations of the media (dream on, dreamers!). And there were the pessimists (realists?) calling for much more social research input to the policy process. The arguments on both sides were compelling.

This monograph is very much worth reading, not only for what it tells us about the present state of social research on the telephone (including an excellent bibliography) but also for the discussions of research methodology and policy making.

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**Know-How Agreements and EEC Competition Law** by *Guillermo Cabanellas and Jose Massaguer* (VCH Books and Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Patent, Copyright and Competition Law, Munich, 1991), pp. 230, \$96.50, ISBN 3-527-26005-6.