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# The Media

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## Chapter 15

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*In this chapter we will learn about*

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- The sources of our news
- The historical development of the ownership of the American media and its implications for the political news we get
- The role of journalists
- The link between the media and politics
- The relationship of citizens to the media

# Where do we get our news?

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- Newspapers and magazines
  - Readership is on the decline
  - Fewer newspapers than in many industrialized countries
  - Only 7% of people read a national paper, but 44% read local papers
- Radio
  - Made news more up-to-the minute and personal

# Where do we get our news?, cont.

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- Television

- Dramatically changed the way people received their news

- Led to narrowcasting

- Has increased the importance of image

- 51% of Americans watch local news; 39% watch cable news; 36% watch network news

# Where do we get our news?, cont.

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- The Internet

- Revolutionizing the way we get our news

- 20% report getting their political news from the Internet; this percentage is rising

- Blogs

- More interactive than other media

# The early American press

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- Extremely partisan
- Lacked independence because they were dependent on parties for funding

# Growing media independence

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- Readership could be expanded if it didn't alienate one particular group of people
- The penny press
- Yellow journalism

# The media today: concentrated corporate power

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- Consequences of corporate ownership
  - Commercial bias
  - Reduced emphasis on political news
  - Infotainment
  - Conflicts of interest

# Alternatives to corporate media

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- Public radio and television (e.g., NPR)
- Alternative press (e.g., *Village Voice*)
- Ideological magazines (e.g., *Nation*)
- Internet

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# Regulation of broadcast media

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- The equal time rule
- The fairness doctrine
- The right of rebuttal
- The Telecommunications Act of 1996

# Roles of journalists

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- Gatekeepers
- Disseminators
- Investigators
- Public mobilizers

# A liberal media bias?

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- Characteristics of journalists
  - Ideology
  - Party identification
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Ethnic origin
  - Religion

# The growth of the Washington press corps

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- The revolving door
- The rise of the pundit

# The shaping of public opinion by the media

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- Agenda setting
- Priming
- Framing
- Persuasion by professional communicators

# The portrayal of politics as conflict and image

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- Horse-race journalism
- The emphasis on image
- Scandal watching
- Growing negativism, increased cynicism

# Consequences of the emphasis on conflict and image

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- An increase in citizen disaffection with politics
- An increase in cynicism about politics and the media
- New forms of media replacing older ones

# News management techniques

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- Tight control of information
- Tight control of access to the politician
- Elaborate communications bureaucracy

# News management techniques, cont.

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- Concerted effort to bypass the White House press corps
- Prepackaging the news in sound bites
- Leaks

# The citizens and the media

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- The new media
- Civic journalism